

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S SPEECHES

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EDITED BY CHARLES W. BOYD

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
THE RIGHT HON.
AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

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IV. THE UNIONIST ALLIANCE: SPEECHES MAINLY FOREIGN AND COLONIAL— *Continued*

THE TRUE CONCEPTION OF EMPIRE

AT THE ANNUAL ROYAL COLONIAL INSTITUTE DINNER,
HOTEL METROPOLE, MARCH 31, 1897

I HAVE now the honour to propose to you the toast of 'Prosperity to the Royal Colonial Institute.' The institute was founded in 1868, almost exactly a generation ago, and I confess that I admire the faith of its promoters, who, in a time not altogether favourable to their opinions, sowed the seed of Imperial patriotism, although they must have known that few of them could live to gather the fruit and to reap the harvest. But their faith has been justified by the result of their labours, and their foresight must be recognised in the light of our present experience.

- It seems to me that there are three distinct stages in our Imperial history. We began to be, and we ultimately became a great Imperial power in the eighteenth century, but, during the greater part of that time, the colonies were regarded, not only by us, but by every European power that possessed them, as possessions valuable in proportion to the pecuniary advantage which they brought to the mother country, which, under that order of ideas, was not truly a mother at all, but appeared rather in the light of a grasping and absentee landlord desiring to take from his tenants the utmost rents he could exact. The colonies were valued and maintained because it was thought that they would be a source of profit—of direct profit—to the mother country.

That was the first stage, and when we were rudely awakened by the War of Independence in America from this dream that the colonies could be held for our profit alone, the second chapter was entered upon, and public opinion seems then to have drifted to the opposite extreme ; and, because the colonies were no longer a source of revenue, it seems to have been believed and argued by many people that their separation from us was only a matter of time, and that that separation should be desired and encouraged lest haply they might prove an encumbrance and a source of weakness.

It was while those views were still entertained, while the little Englanders were in their full career, that this institute was founded to protest against doctrines so injurious to our interests and so derogatory to our honour ; and I rejoice that what was then, as it were, ' a voice crying in the wilderness ' is now the expressed and determined will of the overwhelming majority of the British people. Partly by the efforts of this institute and similar organisations, partly by the writings of such men as Froude and Seeley, but mainly by the instinctive good sense and patriotism of the people at large, we have now reached the third stage in our history, and the true conception of our Empire.

What is that conception ? As regards the self-governing colonies we no longer talk of them as dependencies. The sense of possession has given place to the sentiment of kinship. We think and speak of them as part of ourselves, as part of the British Empire, united to us, although they may be dispersed throughout the world, by ties of kindred, of religion, of history, and of language, and joined to us by the seas that formerly seemed to divide us.

But the British Empire is not confined to the self-governing colonies and the United Kingdom. It includes a much greater area, a much more numerous population in tropical climes, where no considerable European settlement is possible, and where the native population must always vastly outnumber the white inhabitants ; and in these cases also the same change has come over the Imperial idea. Here

also the sense of possession has given place to a different sentiment—the sense of obligation. We feel now that our rule over these territories can only be justified if we can show that it adds to the happiness and prosperity of the people, and I maintain that our rule does, and has, brought security and peace and comparative prosperity to countries that never knew these blessings before.

In carrying out this work of civilisation we are fulfilling what I believe to be our national mission, and we are finding scope for the exercise of those faculties and qualities which have made of us a great governing race. I do not say that our success has been perfect in every case, I do not say that all our methods have been beyond reproach; but I do say that in almost every instance in which the rule of the Queen has been established and the great *Pax Britannica* has been enforced, there has come with it greater security to life and property, and a material improvement in the condition of the bulk of the population. No doubt, in the first instance, when these conquests have been made, there has been bloodshed, there has been loss of life among the native populations, loss of still more precious lives among those who have been sent out to bring these countries into some kind of disciplined order, but it must be remembered that that is the condition of the mission we have to fulfil. There are, of course, among us—there always are among us, I think—a very small minority of men who are ready to be the advocates of the most detestable tyrants, provided their skin is black—men who sympathise with the sorrows of Prempeh and Lobengula, and who denounce as murderers those of their countrymen who have gone forth at the command of the Queen, and who have redeemed districts as large as Europe from the barbarism and the superstition in which they had been steeped for centuries. I remember a picture by Mr. Selous of a philanthropist—an imaginary philanthropist, I will hope—sitting cosily by his fireside and denouncing the methods by which British civilisation was promoted. This philanthropist complained of the use of Maxim guns and other instruments of warfare, and asked why we could not

proceed by more conciliatory methods, and why the impis of Lobengula could not be brought before a magistrate, and fised five shillings and bound over to keep the peace.

No doubt there is a humorous exaggeration in this picture, but there is gross exaggeration in the ffame of mind against which it was directed. You cannot have omelettes without breaking eggs ; you cannot destroy the practices of barbarism, of slavery, of superstition, which for centuries have desolated the interior of Africa, without the use of force ; but if you will fairly contrast the gain to humanity with the price which we are bound to pay for it, I think you may well rejoice in the result of such expeditions as those which have been recently conducted with such signal success in Nyassaland, Ashanti, Benin, and Nupé—expeditions which may have, and indeed have, cost valuable lives, but as to which we may rest assured that for one life lost a hundred will be gained, and the cause of civilisation and the prosperity of the people will in the long run be eminently advanced. But no doubt such a state of things, such a mission as I have described, involves heavy responsibility. In the wide dôminions of the Queen the doors of the temple of Janus are never closed, and it is a gigantic task that we have undertaken when we have determined to wield the sceptre of empire. Great is the task, great is the responsibility, but great is the honour ; and I am convinced that the conscience and the spirit of the country will rise to the height of its obligations, and that we shall have the strength to fulfil the mission which our history and our national character have imposed upon us.

In regard to the self-governing colonies our task is much lighter. We have undertaken, it is true, to protect them with all the strength at our command against foreign aggression, although I hope that the need for our intervention may never arise. But there remains what then will be our chief duty—that is, to give effect to that sentiment of kinship to which I have referred and which I believe is deep in the heart of every Briton. We want to promote a closer and a firmer union between all members of the great British

race, and in this respect we have in recent years made great progress—so great that I think sometimes some of our friends are apt to be a little hasty, and to expect even a miracle to be accomplished. I would like to ask them to remember that time and patience are essential elements in the development of all great ideas. Let us, gentlemen, keep our ideal always before us. For my own part, I believe in the practical possibility of a federation of the British race, but I know that it will come, if it does come, not by pressure, not by anything in the nature of dictation from this country, but it will come as the realisation of a universal desire, as the expression of the dearest wish of our colonial fellow-subjects themselves.

That such a result would be desirable, would be in the interest of all of our colonies as well as of ourselves, I do not believe any sensible man will doubt. It seems to me that the tendency of the time is to throw all power into the hands of the greater empires, and the minor kingdoms—those which are non-progressive—seem to be destined to fall into a secondary and subordinate place. But, if Greater Britain remains united, no empire in the world can ever surpass it in area, in population, in wealth, or in the diversity of its resources.

Let us, then, have confidence in the future. I do not ask you to anticipate with Lord Macaulay the time when the New Zealander will come here to gaze upon the ruins of a great dead city. There are in our present condition no visible signs of decrepitude and decay. The mother country is still vigorous and fruitful, is still able to send forth troops of stalwart sons to people and to occupy the waste spaces of the earth; but yet it may well be that some of these sister nations whose love and affection we eagerly desire may in the future equal and even surpass our greatness. A trans-oceanic capital may arise across the seas, which will throw into shade the glories of London itself; but in the years that must intervene let it be our endeavour, let it be our task, to keep alight the torch of Imperial patriotism, to hold fast the affection and the confidence of our kinsmen across the

seas, that so in every vicissitude of fortune the British Empire may present an unbroken front to all her foes, and may carry on even to distant ages the glorious traditions of the British flag. It is because I believe that the Royal Colonial Institute is contributing to this result that with all sincerity I propose the toast of the evening.

THE CIVIL SERVICE

LONDON, MAY 18, 1898

[In presiding at the twelfth Annual Dinner of the Civil Service Club.]

YOUR EXCELLENCY, MY LORDS, AND GENTLEMEN,—Our proceedings have been saddened by the thought which is, I am sure, in all our minds—that the greatest statesman of our time and generation is passing to his rest. There must be many here, perhaps even a majority, who have either served with or under Mr. Gladstone, and I am sure you will all agree with me that no Minister has ever carried with him so great an admiration from all those with whom he has been connected or has secured a greater amount of affectionate devotion from those who have been brought into the most intimate contact with him. Now he is followed by the sympathy, the respectful sympathy, of all his countrymen. I believe that the promoters of this gathering would, if they had been able, have been glad to postpone it for a time ; but, for reasons you will understand, the fact that the preparations were begun weeks or months ago and other reasons, that was found impossible. I may add that, in a way, this is not an ordinary festivity. It is, in some sort, an institution intended and calculated to maintain the good feeling and *esprit de corps* which is so necessary in a great public service. Therefore, I hope it will be thought we are following a great example and only doing our duty in carrying out the engagement into which we entered. Gentlemen, the toast I have to propose is ‘The Civil Service.’ You are

aware that the human race is divided into two great categories—those who are members of the Civil Service and those who are not. But even the Civil Service may be subdivided into those who are permanent and non-political and those who are political and temporary, who come like shadows and so depart. I have a shrewd suspicion that you could do without us. But I have an absolute conviction that we could not do without you. Therefore, when I was honoured with the invitation to preside on this occasion I felt it would be very ungrateful in me if I declined—I will not say to pay my debt, because that would be impossible, but to acknowledge my obligations, which is as much as many debtors are accustomed to do. Gentlemen, eighteen years ago I was first called to be the chief of a great office. I came to my work as an entire outsider, not without certain prejudices. I had heard a good deal of the circumlocution office, of red tape, and official obstruction, and I fully admit I expected to find a good deal of it where I was going. But, on the contrary, I found a body of trained experts, as businesslike as any men I ever met in my life, perfect encyclopædias of miscellaneous knowledge with vast stores of experience, all of which they gladly and cordially placed at the service of their temporary chief. I found every application from the public, however absurd, every complaint, however ill-founded, and every suggestion, however wild and insane, was treated with respect, was carefully examined and was decided upon with a single eye to the public service and with an evident desire to do justice to every individual. So I began to understand the comment once made to me by a distinguished foreigner who said: ‘The Civil servants or officials are the servants of the public, but with us the public is the slave of the officials.’ But, gentlemen, there is a great deal more than this to be said about that great and wonderful Civil Service which has, by a long and honourable tradition, earned for itself a character, a code of laws, according to which it becomes impossible for it to succumb to the weakness by which other bureaucracies have been attacked. Englishmen are born grumblers, and

especially we like to grumble at the Government which is our own creation. It is quite true, if anything goes wrong with us personally, or in public, we lay it to the charge of the Government. As it was in Canning's days, so now it is the Government that fills the butcher's shops with big blue flies. Yet I think it would be very difficult to find an Englishman who does not infinitely prefer his own Government to any other under the sun. What is the reason of that preference? I might have thought that it was due to the virtues of the present Ministry, if the present Ministry were eternal. But I know full well the Ministry of to-day has succeeded the Ministry of yesterday, and it will shortly be followed by the Ministry of to-morrow. Now for these other Ministries I have not a word to say. I can quite understand they are unworthy of your confidence and support. Therefore I have to seek for some more permanent cause for the popularity, the comparative popularity, which, after all, our system of administration enjoys, and I find the cause in that permanent Civil Service which secures for us continuity of policy, uniformity of purpose, and which, in every detail of public life, brings that high standard of honour and that sense of duty by which I am glad to say the British Civil Service has always been distinguished. There are two special characteristics which strike one in, considering Her Majesty's Civil Service. The first is, of course, the absolute purity of the service, to which not a breath of suspicion can by possibility attach of any interested or pecuniary motive. That, of course, is almost a platitude. It would be an insult to dwell upon it; and yet we must bear in mind that in some other countries, and even in our own country years ago, this quality was absent. And if it were absent we know perfectly well that the consideration and the admiration now felt for the Civil Service would at once be exchanged for that contemptuous toleration and even disgust which is felt towards it in some other countries which I will not name lest I should be accused of provoking international difficulties. But the second great characteristic is the loyalty of the service to its chiefs. Those chiefs—

I am speaking of the temporary ones—are chosen alternately from either party ; but, if I may judge from my own experience, and I know I may, both parties alike can count on the absolute fidelity of all the officials of their respective staffs. That is a great thing to say. On the other hand, it may be said with equal truth that no political chief thinks of the political opinions of his subordinates. I have served in three great offices. Of course I have never inquired, and it is only by accident that I have ever known, what are the political opinions of any of those with whom I worked. Of course the subordination of political opinions may sometimes appear to be irksome, but it must always be borne in mind that it secures the permanence of the servants. It makes them permanent while we are temporary, and it secures that general confidence without which the service would never effect what it has been able to accomplish. There are, no doubt, other things besides political effacement, other sacrifices which the service is called upon to make. They have to see very often the credit given to others for ideas which are wholly their own. It is true they escape criticism. It falls in no small share to those who sometimes father their opinions. But what must be more unsatisfactory must be for an able Civil servant who had crammed his great gun with magnificent proposals and then finds when the time comes to fire it off that there has been an accident owing to the stupidity or clumsiness of the marksman. Then I can appreciate the feelings of the man who should desire that he also might enter into the fray and further his opinions by his voice as well as by his minutes. But again there is compensation. If you do not always get the credit due to you, on the other hand I hope you seldom get the blame, and I can assure you, from personal experience, that even the freedom to make public speeches is not altogether an unmixed advantage. But, gentlemen, although like the violet and other flowers of the same modest description you blush unseen, I believe the country fully appreciates your merits, and I am quite sure those who have ever been in the position of what is called your official superiors recognise the obliga-

tion which one and all of them owe to you. Therefore it is with the utmost cordiality and the greatest sincerity that I propose health and prosperity to Her Majesty's Civil Service.

In reply to the toast of the 'Chairman':

I am extremely obliged to you for the compliment you have just paid me. It certainly is enhanced by the fact that it has been proposed by Lord Strathcona, the representative of the great dominion which stands at the head of our British colonies. And he is right in thinking that when I leave my office I shall feel I have achieved my highest ambition if I have done anything to draw closer the ties that bind us to those colonies and dependencies. I was interested in a remark which was made by His Excellency the Chinese Minister, when he said he had observed that the Civil Service was neglected in public banquets, that its name was never heard, while other services and other individuals were frantically toasted. I should be sorry that His Excellency should go away with any false impression. Therefore I will say to him that we English are a reserved people; we talk less about that which we love the most. Sir Ralph Knox has suggested that these banquets are intended in some sort to repair an omission, and that they are opportunities for what he calls eminent persons once in a year to sing your praises. I can assure you, gentlemen, that more or less eminent persons will never be wanting to enjoy that privilege. But I admit I should like to see a change in the programme, and I would fain venture to suggest to you that on some occasion you should invite as your guests the whole of the Ministry, and even the House of Commons itself, and that you should tell them what you think of them, and they should not be able to reply. That indeed would be a great advantage to us. Lord Strathcona has said that in my time I have borne a great deal of criticism, and I think he suggested that it had not done me any good, but that is because he is ill-informed. I have always thought when I was being criticised that I could do it so much better myself.

And if that is impossible, the next best thing would be that every Minister should be criticised by his under-secretary. Then, indeed, we should have an exposition of the internal workings of governmental administration which would be of the utmost advantage to all concerned. If that, too, be impossible, I can only hope that there may be still among us some Samuel Pepys who has kept the memories of his own and his chief's particular failings, and that those may be given at no short date to the world. I admit I think it is to all of us a matter of the intensest curiosity what is thought of us in the offices over which we preside. It has been said that it is hard for a man to be a hero to his valet; but how much harder is it for a man to be a hero to his own office, where all his weaknesses are no doubt commented upon in a friendly—I have no doubt in a cordial—spirit, and where the secret history of all the great performances which have raised him to his eminence exists in the minds of even the latest clerk in the office. This idea I am sure will fructify in your minds. You will feel if you adopt it that you are not only providing for yourself practically an indefinite amusement, but that you are patriotically endeavouring to serve the State. 'Know thyself' is the first idea of the philosopher, and I am sure it would be a great advantage to Ministers of the State. I thank you most cordially for the kind manner in which you have received this toast.*

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

HOUSE OF COMMONS, OCTOBER 19, 1899

[On October 9 President Kruger broke off negotiations with the British Government, addressed to them his memorable ultimatum, and, within a few specified hours, invaded British territory. Parliament assembling, the following speech was made on an amendment to the Address moved by the Hon. Philip Stanhope, later Lord Weardale, representing 'strong disapproval of the conduct of the negotiations with the Government of the Transvaal which have involved us in hostilities with the South African Republic.' Preceded by Sir William Harcourt in the debate, 'I rise,' said Mr. Chamberlain, 'with a feeling of satisfaction and almost of relief

at being able now to reply to the accusations and insinuations which have been made against Her Majesty's Government during the past few months.' Speeches had been made in the country which 'were calculated to encourage President Kruger in his resistance, and to embarrass Her Majesty's Government in the exercise of these most difficult and critical functions in which they have been engaged for so considerable a period.' But the time was past when speeches could longer do much mischief. As the result of the war could not be influenced by debate, the time had come when the conduct of the Government might be usefully discussed, and all honest criticism was welcome. On 'the honourable member for Burnley and his personalities' Mr. Chamberlain inflicted what a politically unbiased contemporary recalls as 'a terrific castigation.' On one point Mr. Stanhope had 'even raked up the ashes of the inquiry of the South African Committee into the Jameson Raid. I thought, as far as I am concerned, that that discussion was necessarily closed by the report of the committee which was appointed by this House. That committee contained members from both sides of the House, whose honour and integrity and impartiality nobody could be found to dispute. I presented myself for examination to that committee. I told them what I knew, and the honourable member for Burnley is disposed to doubt my words. I hope, even in the passion of debates in this House, for the honour of the House, that there will be very few members on his own side who will sympathise with him.' On the charge against himself and Sir A. Milner brought by Mr. Stanhope without proof or attempted proof, 'save a declaration upon his own heart and conscience,' after the manner of General Mercier against Dreyfus, that they had for many months designed a war against the Transvaal, Mr. Chamberlain declared that there was 'no parliamentary language in which he could describe it,' and that, if guilty, impeachment would have been too good for him. 'What proof did the honourable member give of this monstrous charge? Not one iota, not one reference, not one fact, not one quotation.' The rest of the speech, with its review of the recent history of British relations with the Transvaal and the defence of the Government's policy based on the cardinal points of the South African situation, was qualified by Mr. Balfour, then leader of the House, as 'great.']

SIR, the time is past when anything that can be said in this House will embarrass Her Majesty's Government. The issues are out of the hands of the politician. There was a time, I admit, when speeches such as have been made in the country were calculated to embarrass the Government, and did embarrass the Government, when the right honourable gentleman the leader of the Opposition reiterated—not once alone—but reiterated down even to the last few weeks, I might almost say the last few days, his statement that there was no need for military preparations, that there was no cause for the use of force, and that we were un-

necessarily provoking a conflict—that was a hint, not an actual statement. There was a time when there were others who argued the cause of the Boers with greater success and greater eloquence than their own advocates, when they succeeded, to their own satisfaction at any rate, in proving that their country was entirely in the wrong. I have not the least doubt that they were acting under a sense of conscientious conviction—that they were acting with a full sense of responsibility; but if they had any common sense or intelligence they could not have doubted for a moment that the words which they felt it their duty to speak, the statements which they considered themselves bound to make, were calculated to encourage President Kruger in his resistance, and to embarrass Her Majesty's Government in the exercise of those most difficult and critical functions in which we have been engaged for so considerable a period. I say that all these considerations may now be put aside, there is an open field, the fortune of war, whatever it may be, will not be affected by our debate, and now is the time when our past conduct, everything we have done or left undone, the mistakes we have made, may be fairly brought to the test of the opinion and judgment of this House, may be usefully as well as fully discussed. Therefore I say in the first instance, and on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, that we welcome this amendment; it is a wide and broad amendment which lays open for consideration everything which has happened during the last three months, or even beyond that time. We welcome the amendment, we welcome all honest and honourable criticism. I wish I could apply those epithets to the speech of the mover of the amendment. He even raked up the ashes of the inquiry of the South African Committee into the Jameson Raid. I thought, as far as I am concerned, that that discussion was necessarily closed by the report of the committee which was appointed by this House. That committee contained members from both sides of the House, whose honour and integrity and impartiality nobody could be found to dispute. I presented myself for examination to that committee, I told them what

I knew, and the honourable member for Burnley is disposed to dispute my words. I hope, even in the passion of debates in this House, for the honour of the House, that there will be very few members on his own side who will sympathise with him. The honourable member went on to challenge me to produce a letter which I wrote to Mr. Hawksley, the solicitor of the Chartered Company, some time after the raid, which he says he challenged me to produce on a previous occasion. Sir, what right has he to send a challenge to me? Is he my judge? I am not disposed to gratify his curiosity. I have no doubt that he intends to found, or he thinks that he may be able to found, upon that refusal a continuation of the campaign of slander which has been going on for some time past. He is mistaken; I will not reply to his challenge, I will not produce to him the letter. But I will tell the right honourable gentleman that, like many other persons who take up the task of an amateur detective, he has found a mare's nest. And if the right honourable gentleman the leader of the Opposition, or the right honourable gentleman the member for Monmouth, who were both upon the committee—if either of those gentlemen will express a desire or a wish, or any interest in this letter, I will produce it to them with the greatest of pleasure. They are not only honourable members, they are honourable men.

The honourable member for Burnley went on to speak of the South African League. It was an organisation which was, I think he said, subsidised by Jewish and other capitalists, and which employed hundreds and thousands of pounds to poison the minds of the people of this country and of South Africa. Sir, the honourable member may know more of the South African League than I do; but, as far as I know, I can say I do not know the name of a single person who belongs to it, and to my knowledge I have never been in communication with any member of the league. I have been informed by Sir Alfred Milner—it is in the Blue-book—that the organisation has received very little pecuniary assistance, that the largest subscription did not exceed a sum of £50, and that, in fact, from what I have heard, it

is one of the poorest and, at the same time, most representative political organisations which has ever been established. When the honourable member talks about this league or association poisoning the wells of public opinion, why, sir, I call to mind what happened in another country a little while ago, and I think of General Mercier and his Dreyfus syndicate. I noticed that my honourable friend the member for Durham also referred to the league with a different purpose. He said that the projects of the league were opposed to and inconsistent with the policy of Her Majesty's Government, and he asked why we did not repudiate it. Surely my honourable friend could not have put that question seriously to the Government. What is the position of this league? It is a political association. The Government conducted its negotiations without the assistance of leagues or associations and made proposals for reform in the Transvaal, and this league appears to have thought that the proposals did not go far enough for the purpose, and they made representations to Sir Alfred Milner to that effect. They had a perfect right to make those representations, and why on earth are we to be called upon to repudiate an association with which we have absolutely nothing whatever to do, with which we have no official communication, but whose main objects, so far as the principles are concerned, are undoubtedly identical with our own? Suppose this Government next year should bring forward a project for redistribution; suppose the Liberal Unionist Association of Durham or the Conservative Federation in this county should consider that that project was inadequate, and should make a representation to Lord Salisbury to that effect, and put forward a scheme which went much further—well, sir, I do not suppose that the settled decision of the Government would be in the least altered by that resolution or protest, but surely nobody in their senses would call upon the Government to repudiate the association. Sir, so far as this league is concerned I hardly understand the object of the honourable member in introducing it at all into this discussion. The honourable

member for Burnley went on to invent an imaginary collaboration between Mr. Rhodes and myself. Sir, I think I have said before in this House, if not I say it now, that from the time of the Raid I have had no communication, either direct or indirect, with Mr. Rhodes on any subject connected with South African policy. He has never spoken to me about it; I have never spoken to him. I have seen him about the Cape to Cairo railway, about Rhodesia, but never have we touched upon or had any communication whatever with regard to the South African difficulty. Any knowledge I may have of his movements has been derived from the newspapers. Mr. Rhodes has been absolutely quiet, has remained absolutely aloof from the politics of South Africa; and the only prominent part he has taken is when he went recently, millionaire though he be, to face a danger greater than ordinary. I come now to the last point of the honourable member for Burnley. The honourable member finally alleges a conspiracy. Against whom? I think I noticed that while he was loudly cheered by a few members of the House while attacking the Colonial Secretary, there was a marked coolness when he began to attack Sir A. Milner, a distinguished public servant; and when he accused Sir A. Milner, and accused me, of being in a conspiracy.

MR. STANHOPE said he did not use the word conspiracy at all. What he imputed to the right honourable gentleman and Sir A. Milner was that they had determined in their minds some months ago that war was the only solution of the difficulty.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: If that was the statement the honourable member made there is no parliamentary language in which I can express my opinion of it. To make such a charge against a minister, a responsible Minister of the Crown, and against one of the most distinguished servants of the Crown—to have made such a charge and to accuse them of acts for which, if they were guilty, impeachment would be too good for them, and to make that without proof is—not right. Now, sir,—I am speaking within the recollection of

the House—what proof did the honourable member give of this monstrous charge? Not one scrap, not one iota, not one reference, not one fact, not one quotation. The whole thing is given to the House as an accusation upon his heart and conscience.

I am done with the honourable member, and I turn with the greatest satisfaction from his personalities to the speech of the right honourable gentleman the member for West Monmouth.¹

Now, sir, let me say on the part of the Government, that we welcome his honest criticism. Hitherto the difficulty with which we have had to deal is that all criticism has been vague and indefinite, that the grounds of the statements which have been made in reference to our policy have been hitherto concealed. Until the speech of the right honourable gentleman it appeared to be in the minds of many members of the Opposition that in some way or other at some time, by some act of omission or of commission which has not been explained, that in some way or another, at some period of these negotiations, we have interfered in such a way as to prevent a peaceful settlement which might otherwise have been secured. Now, sir, I am going to make an admission. I am inclined to complain—or perhaps I should not say complain—of the right honourable gentleman, who does, I think, occasionally—unintentionally, of course, but still rather unfairly—twist former utterances of his opponents in order to prove their supposed or real inconsistency. I will give an illustration of that in the speech of the right honourable gentleman. He referred to the speech I made on May 6, 1896—a speech which has never been corrected by me—and I do not know, therefore, what words have been omitted. The right honourable gentleman knows what a difference the omission of a word may make, and I have for long found no time to correct my speeches. But, at all events, take the speech as it appears in Hansard. It was a speech in which I expressed my opinion that it would be impolitic, even immoral, to go to war with the Transvaal

¹ Sir William Harcourt.

in order to enforce certain internal reforms. Well, sir, the introduction of a single word would make the meaning clear. But what I complain of is that a particular passage like that is taken without reference to the circumstances under which the speech is delivered or to the general tone of the speech. I appeal to the right honourable gentleman to judge even me fairly. Is it likely that I should have ever intended to say, even in 1896, that it would always be immoral, that it would always be impossible, that it would always be impolitic to interfere in the internal affairs of the Transvaal? What I meant then, and what I say now, is that, unless the Conventions are broken, we have no claim under the Conventions for any interference in the internal affairs of the Transvaal. But if our fellow-subjects are injured by the conduct of internal affairs in the South African Republic, that gives us at once the right of interference, even under international law, which is entirely independent of all Conventions, of the suzerainty, or of any other points of dispute. I am led to make this protest at this stage because I am now going to make an admission which may also be construed as inconsistent with what I have said before. The argument on the other side has been that if we had done something different peace might have been preserved. Well, sir, I say that, having most carefully considered all the circumstances in the light of the most recent events—in the light of the ultimatum and in the light of the recent speeches of President Kruger and others—I have now come to the conclusion that war was always inevitable. It is a conclusion at which I have only recently and most reluctantly arrived. Sir, the right honourable gentleman or any one else can find passages at different times in the dispatches which were only the other day laid upon the table of the House in which I have continued to express—though I am not certain that I have been sanguine, but, at all events, in which I have continued to express hopes of peace. I expressed such hopes of peace when the House broke up at the end of last session. From the first day I came into office I hoped for peace; I strove for peace. At that time, and

at an earlier period, down even to the most recent period, I have believed in peace. But do let us all look at the matter in the new light in which it is now presented to us. My honourable friend the member for Durham expressed in eloquent terms his additional regret that, not only were we at war, but that we had come to war after being apparently so near to peace. The leader of the Opposition spoke in the same sense, and the right honourable member for West Monmouth followed him in the same line. Sir, have we ever been near peace? We appeared to be near peace; reasons have been given to us to make us think that we were near it. But is it not true, when we come to look at the whole situation, that always there have been cardinal differences; that there have been things which it was essential for us to demand and to obtain; and that these things President Kruger and his friends and advisers have always been determined not to give? I claim these quotations from my past speeches upon this subject as confirmation of what I again emphatically declare to the House—that from first to last in these negotiations, while I have put first in my mind the determination at all costs to secure justice for British subjects and to secure the paramountcy of this country (or call it what you will), while I have done that, within these limits I have striven to the very best of my poor ability to secure a peaceful settlement. When I have been in doubt as to President Kruger's intentions I have given him the benefit of the doubt. I am taunted with having spoken of his magnanimity. I desired to believe him magnanimous. Some great man, Goethe, I think, said that if you wish a man to be what you want him to be you must express your belief that he is so. I convinced myself, I satisfied myself, that there were indications of magnanimity which I rejoiced to acknowledge. Well, sir, I may have erred. You may ridicule my foresight; you may condemn my moderation; but you cannot deny that all this points to my intimate and anxious desire for that peaceful settlement which we have failed to secure. Before I go in detail into the points raised by the right honourable

gentleman, let us see—and this is the pleasantest task in which any man in my position can engage—how far we are agreed. We are agreed on the whole, but for some insignificant exceptions, who will themselves admit that they do not carry much representative weight at the present time, as to the policy and duty of the Government in the present situation. After that extraordinary ultimatum which was addressed to the Queen and her Government it is impossible, as the right honourable member for West Monmouth observed, for Her Majesty's Government to do anything other than to prosecute with all energy the war which has been thrust upon us, and to carry it as quickly as possible to a successful conclusion. But our agreement does not cease there; that is only the present situation. When honourable members opposite come to consider the whole subject they will be surprised to find how trifling really are the differences between us. At all events, I can show to you that we are absolutely agreed as to the objects of the policy. It is true that the leader of the Opposition did say in a speech the other day—and I think it was rather a hasty expression—that the man in the street did not know what the cause of the war was. Well, sir, the man in the street really is wiser than the right honourable gentleman thought him to be. With that great instinct of the British people in all times of crisis, the man in the street has put aside technicalities and legal subtleties and has gone to the root of the question. He knows perfectly well that we are going to war in defence of principles—the principles upon which this Empire has been founded and upon which alone it can exist. What are these principles? I do not think that any one—however extreme a view he may take of this particular war, and however much he may condemn and criticise the policy of Her Majesty's Government—will dispute what I am going to say. The first principle is this—that if we are to maintain our position in regard to other nations; if we are to maintain our existence as a great power in South Africa, we are bound to show that we are both willing and able to protect British subjects everywhere when they are

made to suffer from oppression and injustice. This is especially incumbent upon us in the present case, because equality was promised between the two white races by President Kruger ; because that equality was the foundation of the negotiations upon which the independence of the Transvaal was conceded ; and, further, that equality was promised to British subjects in South Africa by Mr. Gladstone, the head of the Government which made the Convention. That is the first principle. It is a principle which prevails always and everywhere, and in every difference which we may have with another country ; and it prevails with special force and emphasis in this case in which our relations with the Transvaal in the establishment of the Republic are so special and peculiar. The second principle is that, in the interests of South Africa and in the interests of the British Empire, Great Britain must remain the paramount power in South Africa. Of course, when we talk about South Africa we cannot always make every qualification and exception. What we mean is not the German or Portuguese possessions, but the two Republics and the British colonies. Almost every one will admit that that great principle is one which both sides of the House have determined to maintain. Why do we maintain it ? Because, as the leader of the Opposition said—most wisely, if I may venture to say so—the peace of South Africa depends upon our accepting the responsibilities of that position. These, then, are the two principles, and we are at war now because the oligarchy—for it is nothing more than an oligarchy ; it is a Republic, but it is not a democracy—because the oligarchy at Pretoria, very often, I am afraid, I am certain, in its own personal interest, aided and abetted by President Steyn and advisers outside the Republic, has persistently pursued, from the very day of the signing of the Convention of 1881 down to now, a policy which tended to the evasion of its obligations ; a policy by which it has broken its promises ; by which it has placed, gradually, but surely, British subjects in the Transvaal in a position of distinct inferiority ; by which it has conspired against and under-

mined the suzerainty, the paramountcy which belongs to Great Britain. I say that these are the objects of the war ; and I challenge—no, I do not challenge, I invite—honourable members opposite, or the vast majority of them, at any rate, to say that they differ from me in thinking that these two great objects—the maintenance of the rights of British subjects and of the paramountcy of this country—are objects in which they do not share as fully as ourselves. Now, did President Kruger at any time intend to make these objects possible ? As I have said, we have hoped and believed ; but, looking back at what has passed, does any one continue to believe that there was any time at which these two objects commended themselves to President Kruger's mind and, of course, to the minds of his advisers and colleagues ? If they did not, if that great difference has always existed between us, then am I not right in saying that war was inevitable some time or other, that some day force would have to be used by this country, unless, indeed, which I will not contemplate for a moment, any party could be found which was willing to betray those interests ?

• This raises a question which I want to make perfectly clear. Are there no grievances of British subjects in the Transvaal ? Is it denied that they have been placed in a position of degrading and humiliating inferiority ? I am not going to quote from Blue-books, although they are full of evidence on that subject. For my present purpose I rely absolutely on the statements of honourable and right honourable gentlemen opposite. • The right honourable gentleman the leader of the Opposition said at Guildford that British subjects had not the elements of civil rights or of civil freedom. The right honourable gentleman the member for Fife said that they were denied those civil and political rights that were customarily regarded as the necessary equipment of a civilised and social community. Lord Rosebery said they were under an intolerable condition of subjection and injustice, and the right honourable gentleman the member for Monmouth, in a letter to the *Times*, spoke of the grievances which we all admit. That is granted.

With very few exceptions we agree as to the magnitude of the grievances. Does the House think that these grievances are personal, that we are concerned because Mr. Jones of the Transvaal is subjected to some inconvenience, pecuniary loss, or personal degradation? That in itself is a matter of some importance, for, after all, we do not forget the hackneyed phrase, which is a true one, that it is something to be British citizens. But there is something more than that, and it is this. What is to be our position in the world—I will say, what is to be our position in Africa—if we are to submit to this inferiority? Is peace to be preserved under these conditions? Are racial differences and animosities to be avoided? Why, sir, the right honourable gentleman the leader of the Opposition has again and again referred in terms none too strong to the evil of racial animosity. Yes, sir, but what he has always omitted to observe a colleague who sits near him could have informed him of. I refer to the right honourable the member for Aberdeen, who says that this racial animosity has not to be created by anything that we do. It was not created by the raid—it existed before. Sir, the animosity, the racial animosity, which has been the curse of South Africa, is based upon contempt. Hate is bad enough, I admit. I would sooner have the hate of any man than his contempt, and as it is with individuals, so it is with nations. These animosities are bitter, are increasing, and will increase as long as one white race in South Africa has contempt for the other. Is it denied? It was to his views on that point to which I wanted to refer when I spoke of the right honourable gentleman the member for Aberdeen.¹ He said in that book, for which we all have, I hope, the greatest admiration, the following: ‘It must be admitted that the event belied some of their hopes’—he was speaking of the Convention of 1881. ‘They (Mr. Gladstone’s Government) had expected that the Transvaal people would appreciate the generosity of the retrocession as well as the humanity which was willing to forgo vengeance for the tarnished lustre of British arms.

¹ Mr. Bryce, later Lord Bryce.

The Boers, however, saw neither generosity nor humanity in their conduct, but only fear. Jubilant over their victories and (like the Kaffirs in the South Coast wars) not realising the overwhelming force which could have been brought against them, they fancied themselves entitled to add some measure of contempt to the dislike they already cherished to the English, and they have ever since shown themselves unpleasant neighbours.' Sir, that is a wise word and a true word. In my opinion, there will never be an end to racial animosity until both the white races have, I will not say learnt to love each other, but, at all events, to respect each other. The quotation which I have read shows, I think, that both sides of the House are agreed as to the objects we should have in view.

But are we agreed as to the main lines on which we should pursue our objects? Of course, peaceful negotiation is the best line—the line which should be exhausted before any other is attempted. That we are all agreed upon. I now come to my right honourable friend the member for Montrose,¹ and I may say that he has made speeches in the country of great moderation and, I need not say, with great courage, because he has been championing what is undoubtedly an unpopular cause. This is what he said: 'We are all for insisting upon fair play.' Again he said: 'I entirely agree with the Government in insisting'—I call attention to that word 'insisting'—'upon the vote being granted after five years' residence.' The leader of the Opposition says if we claim, as we do claim, if we enforce, as we do enforce, our right to seek redress, it is outside the Convention. What I want to point out is this—that the leader of the Opposition and my right honourable friend take what may be called an extreme view both as to the right and the necessity of enforcing our just claims. Now, sir, is it not absurd, under these circumstances, to say that we did wrong in contemplating the possibility of military preparations? The thing would be inexplicable except on the assumption that both these right honourable gentlemen contemplated

¹ Mr. Morley.

that a time might come when we should have to 'enforce' and 'insist' after what had previously been friendly negotiations. Now I ask every fair-minded man on both sides, If you were in power and in the place of this Government, what would have been your course? What would have been your policy? It is evident you would have pursued the same policy and the same object, and you would have asked for the same reforms, for the same five years' franchise. Where would your policy have diverged from ours? Up to the present we are the most unanimous House of Commons on both sides that I have ever heard of. This is the point I would put. Suppose the negotiations had failed with you as they have failed with us, what would you have done then? If your insistence had been of no avail, would you have withdrawn your demands? Would you have betrayed your countrymen? Would you have lost South Africa? It is absurd to answer except in one way. You would have been bound by your own utterances. You could not have helped yourselves. You would have been bound to carry your policy a step further and use force when persuasion had failed. If you had gone to war under these circumstances, there would have been absolutely no difference between your policy and ours. If you did not go to war, well, sir, I decline to contemplate the alternative, which at all events would have been disastrous to your country.

I wish to say a word upon another subject which has not been mentioned in the debate or referred to in the Blue-books. When we have talked of grievances hitherto we have confined ourselves to the grievances of the whites. The House will bear in mind when we granted the Convention of 1881 and substituted the articles of the Convention of 1884 we undertook the protection of the natives of the Transvaal. Those natives had been our subjects. They were the majority of the inhabitants, and we retroceded them to the Transvaal, the natives whom we had promised to protect. How have we kept our promise? Sir, the treatment of the natives of the Transvaal had been disgraceful, it has been brutal; it has been unworthy of a civilised power. Why have we

not complained, it is said. Why have not I complained? In 1896 I drafted a dispatch, and I sent it out to Sir Hercules Robinson and I instructed him to make representations to the Transvaal as to their conduct to Malaboch and other native chiefs. Then the raid came, and I had to telegraph instructions that that dispatch could not, with any propriety, be presented at that time. That is the true reason why I have not made complaints and why there is therefore very little correspondence in the Blue-books about the native grievances: but do not think for a moment that we have at no time done our duty or kept our promises to these native subjects whom we retroceded against their will, and whom we promised to protect. We have heard a great deal of the Great Trek. I do not know whether the honourable gentlemen who talk about the Great Trek have information different from mine—whether it differs very much from mine. Of course, all questions of history are matters of opinion to a certain extent, but what I want to express here, in the strongest possible terms, is my opinion that the main reason for the trek of the Boers from British rule was their disinclination to be interfered with in their treatment of the native races. That is my belief. My opinion is that the independence of which we hear so much, and which the Boers are said to value so highly, is a free right to treat as they like the people under their control.

I have dealt with the question which I said was the first cause of the war—that is the grievances of British subjects, the injustice done to them. Now I come to the question of supremacy. I believe we are all agreed as to the necessity of maintaining what I describe as supremacy. Then has it been threatened? Has there been any danger to this supremacy? Well, sir, the whole policy and object of the Boers in regard to this matter has been displayed so clearly, that the man in the street can read as he runs. Why, sir, from 1881 downwards they have been patiently, cleverly, persistently, by imperceptible steps, endeavouring to oust the Queen from her suzerainty, to throw off the last trace of subordination,

until, grown bold by apparent immunity in the course they have pursued, they now take off the mask, they show openly what has been their object all along, and declare themselves to be a sovereign independent State. Do you suppose that, though they only declared that in May last, they had not it in their minds? We had not it in our minds—credulous people as we have been. At least I had not it in mine. I cannot speak for my predecessor. I did not know that they had any pretension to be an independent sovereign State until they declared it in the dispatch of May last. I do not care whether they insisted upon it or not. I think they found they had made a mistake by showing their cards, and I think in a subsequent dispatch they were evidently anxious to weaken the effect which they had produced. I think that throws a most lurid light on the policy of the Boers. If you want any confirmation of it you will find it in a perfect flood of witnesses—in the conversations, which came out by no fault of the Boers, between Joubert and Lobengula, when he urged upon that chief to make common cause with the Boers and wipe the stink of the English out of the land; in the negotiations of 1884, to which I shall have to refer; in the refusal of President Kruger to accept the invitation for which he himself had asked in 1896 on the express ground that he found that I refused to discuss with him any alteration of Article 4, which placed the foreign relations of the Transvaal under the control of Her Majesty's Government; in constant intrigues with the Uitlanders themselves whom, again and again, Boer emissaries have invited to give up this appeal to Her Majesty's Government and to engage with the Boers in creating a United South Africa entirely free of Imperial influence and control; and in the treasonable appeal which was circulated widely, weeks before the ultimatum, on the borders of the Cape Colony amongst the Dutch, and in which they were told that their rights as Afrikaners in the English colonies—rights which are exactly on an equality with those of British subjects—were only protected by the continued existence of the two Republics, and that as the two Republics were threatened the

Afrikaners should go to war with the Boers in order to get rid of British supremacy. In every line of the ultimatum, too, there breathes this desire to escape subordination. There is much more to be said upon which we have suspicion which amounts to knowledge—not the proof that you would bring forward in a Court of law, but a suspicion which, I am certain, no one who has been in my office has failed to entertain, a suspicion which points to the fact that the mission, so-called, of Dr. Leyds has been one continual series of intrigues with foreign powers against the British supremacy. There has been an object, present to the minds of a certain number of the Dutch colonists perhaps, but, at all events, to the whole population of the Transvaal Republic and of the Orange Free State, an ideal which, I will go so far as to say, it is very proper of them to entertain, but which it would have been most improper and most dangerous for us to encourage. This ideal was a united South Africa, an independent Republic, permitting us by their good will to retain our hold upon the Cape so long as our naval protection was necessary for the Republic, but leaving us in Africa in one corner, and there only as a matter of sufferance. There are people who say, 'What a preposterous notion. How could they ever have entertained it? How could it ever have been a danger to this great country? How could we, with our enormous wealth and resources, be alarmed by the threats of insubordination on the part of 30,000, be they more or less'—they happen to be a great deal more—of Dutch farmers?' The inequality is not quite so great as that. It is all very well for honourable gentlemen at one time to pretend to underestimate the strength of our enemies and at another to exaggerate it. I hope we take a more reasonable view. What was happening was this, that by continuous accretions of the military armaments of the two States, and especially by the ammunition, arms, guns, artillery, and men that were constantly poured into the Transvaal, the Transvaal had become a few months ago by far the most powerful military State in Africa. Great Britain with all its resources could not stand up against her

at that time. It was impossible. Of course we might, by an expenditure of blood and treasure from which every man would shrink, have restored our supremacy after it had been taken from us, but does anybody think that that would have been a trifling operation? With the whole of South Africa in arms, with the whole of South Africa in the possession of the Boers, does anybody suppose that it would have been a small operation, even for a rich and powerful country, to have put, it may be, 200,000 or 100,000 men into South Africa? That was the danger. We have escaped, I believe, one of the greatest dangers which we have ever been subjected to in Africa. I venture to say that you, the Opposition, without respect of party or individual opinions, with few exceptions, share our three great objects. You desire, as we did, the maintenance of the supremacy; you desire the equality of the white races; you desire the just protection which we have promised to the natives. The main lines of our policy have been the same. You in the last resort, as we in the last resort, would have resorted to arms, if necessary to ensure the objects you had in view. What remains?—and here arises the whole point of difference between the two sides—the details of the negotiations. It is with those I have now to deal. I come first to the question of the suzerainty. The right honourable gentleman the member for West Monmouth, in a speech in the country, said that he thought ‘the suzerainty had been the principal obstacle to a satisfactory settlement.’ I do not think that he put it so strongly last night, but at all events I can assure him, and I think I shall be able to satisfy him, that that opinion is altogether unfounded, and that, although it may be true that the desire to get rid of the suzerainty was one of the great objects, one of the great motive-springs of the Boers, the insistence on suzerainty by this country did not, in itself, in any way interfere with the conduct of the negotiations. I hope the House will bear with me while I endeavour to put before it briefly, but at the same time as clearly as possible, the history of this rather complicated question. The right honourable gentleman the leader of

the Opposition said that the question of the suzerainty had been 'dug up from the grave in which in 1884 it had been decently buried.' I do not quite know what he meant by that. I think I know, and perhaps he will correct me if I am wrong. The right honourable gentleman the member for West Monmouth said that successive Secretaries of State had agreed that the suzerainty was abolished. Now that is an entire mistake.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Monmouth W.): I quoted the words of the right honourable gentleman himself—'successive Secretaries of State.' It was not my statement. It was his—that successive Secretaries of State had declared that they had no right to interfere with the internal affairs of the Transvaal.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: Yes, sir; but I think, if the right honourable gentleman will allow me, that that is not the point. He did say that, but on that he based his further statement that successive Secretaries of State had declared that the suzerainty had been abolished. I am dealing only with the question of suzerainty, not with the right of interference from whatever cause arising. I say that no Secretary of State for the Colonies, from Lord Kimberley in 1881 down to myself, including all those who intervened, has ever stated, or, as I believe, has ever thought, that either the suzerainty was abolished or that the name of suzerainty had been renounced. I believe I can say that this is true. When does the leader of the Opposition suggest that the suzerainty was buried? I suppose in 1884. The right honourable gentleman was not in that Government. I was. I assert that it was not buried in 1884, and I would point out to the right honourable gentleman that in saying it was he makes—unintentionally, of course—a very serious charge against some of his present colleagues, and all the members of the Cabinet, because if the suzerainty was abolished in 1884 our supporters and the country were deceived. What would have been easier than to say then it had been abolished—it would have been more honourable than not to say it was abolished—if as a matter of fact it had been abolished?

But that was not the opinion of any one concerned at the time in those negotiations. I am speaking in the presence of one, at all events, of my colleagues in those days. We were accused of abolishing the suzerainty by our opponents. Lord Cadogan, in the House of Lords, accused Lord Derby of an intention to abolish the suzerainty. What was the reply of Lord Derby? It was, 'What suzerainty meant in the Convention of Pretoria, the condition of things it implied, still remains.' Lord Derby went on to say, 'Although the word was not actually employed, we have kept the substance.' Was that consistent with the abolition of the suzerainty? My proposition is that the suzerainty was never buried, never abolished, from 1884 down to the present time. Throughout successive Governments of different party complexions the existence of the suzerainty was asserted, although the particular word was never used after 1884. Yes; but it was never renounced. I agree with the leader of the Opposition when he says, what does a word matter. As the right honourable gentleman says, we are not going to fight about a word. But is he willing to fight about the substance? That is the whole point. As far as the word goes I agree with the right honourable gentleman. But the cardinal and essential fact is supremacy, predominance, preponderance, paramountcy—call it what you will. I do not care a brass farthing which of those words you choose. You may call it Abracadabra if you like, provided you keep the substance. The right honourable gentleman the member for Monmouth does not agree with the leader of the Opposition, for he said yesterday he rejected paramountcy. It is not merely a question of a word with him. He rejects the thing. He says, 'How can you have paramountcy consistent with the independence of the Transvaal?' I do not agree with the right honourable gentleman. I agree much more with the leader of the Opposition. When you talk of independence here, it appears that in order not to be misunderstood you must always use a tremendous series of words to express a meaning which is after all in the mind of every one. Of course, when we talk of the

independence of the Transvaal we mean independence as limited by the Convention. Very well, I submit that suzerainty is a better term to use in regard to a State whose independence is limited.

SIR W. HARCOURT : By Convention.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN : Certainly by Convention. Surely no one has ever argued that suzerainty was otherwise than defined by the articles of the Convention. I confess my opinion is—although I have said I did not care about a word—that suzerainty is a better word than paramountcy. ‘Suzerainty’ expresses our position in regard to the Transvaal Republic. ‘Paramountcy’ would express our position better with the Orange Free State, over which we have no suzerainty, but in regard to which our relations have always been more or less modified by the fact that we have paramount interests. But, as I have said, it matters little what is the word, provided we have the substance. But why, in those circumstances, was the word used in the dispatch of October 16, 1897 ? It has been supposed by the right honourable gentleman the member for Monmouth that this was a gratuitous introduction of an irritating expression in a dispatch which was intended to be conciliatory and to make for peace. No, sir, it was not so at all. In my judgment the reversion to the word suzerainty was absolutely called for by the action of the Boers in attempting openly to undermine the substance of the suzerainty. The name became of importance when the substance was attacked. That is the point. Let us see now how that happened. We are all agreed as to the importance of the substance, admirably described by Lord Kimberley in 1881 as ‘the superiority over a State possessing independent rights of government subject to reservations in reference to certain specified matters.’ That is the definition which we have always accepted, and upon which we have always proceeded. The word was then chosen as most conveniently describing this superiority. Let me say, in passing, that it is of collateral importance. It is not merely a matter of etymological definition, but the importance of the word consists in the

impression the word produces upon those foreign Powers whose intervention in South Africa we desired to avoid. It is a well-understood term. It gives us certain rights in regard to them, and for that reason I have always preferred it, as a matter of convenience, to any other word that has been suggested. Well, this word suzerainty appears in the preamble of the Convention of 1881. A great deal of confusion has arisen from talking of this preliminary part of the Convention of 1881 as a preamble. It is not properly a preamble. It is the charter of the independence—the limited independence—of the Transvaal. Destroy the preamble and there is no basis whatever for the independence of the Transvaal—no legal and constitutional basis. That, at all events, is the view we have taken on the subject. No doubt, from the moment this Convention was signed—although it was described, in the few days that followed, by President Kruger as a most magnanimous act on the part of the British Government, one which would gain for ever for the British Government and the Queen the loyalty, admiration, and gratitude of the Transvaal people—from almost the day on which his signature was affixed to that Convention President Kruger was engaged in an attempt to get it altered. Accordingly, in 1884, a new Conference took place. What was the origin of that Conference? A letter from the Boer Government asking Her Majesty's Government to consider, what? Not the abolition of the suzerainty, but some restriction of the extent of the suzerainty. Those are the exact words. They did not claim the abolition of the suzerainty—they wanted it to be restricted; as it was so, in fact, subsequently, most imprudently as I am obliged to confess now. But although that was the letter which the Boer Government sent and upon which a deputation from them was received, the moment they got here they changed their note, and they put in a treaty in the introduction of which they claimed to be an independent State, and in that treaty, as between two independent States, they asked for arbitration to settle all differences that might have or had arisen. What was the answer of Lord Derby—of the man

who is now said to have abolished the suzerainty? He returned their treaty to them. He said the terms of the treaty and the form of the treaty were such as Her Majesty's Government could not even consider. So far, at all events, Lord Derby has not abolished the suzerainty. He refused to abolish the suzerainty, and, as I have shown, he in the most express manner declined to consider the subject. The actual Convention which was signed did not mention suzerainty. But why should it? Will honourable gentlemen, those who are lawyers as well as those who are not, apply common sense to this proceeding? You have two very formal and important agreements, contracts between two parties. Is it customary to interpret these contracts by anything else than what is contained within the four corners of them? If you treat these two Conventions in that way, what do you find? That the second Convention says that Her Majesty has been pleased to say such and such articles shall be substituted for such and such other articles. Suppose an Act of Parliament repealed in terms certain clauses of another Act, Clauses 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, would it be contended that it also inferentially repealed Clause 1? Surely in this case, where the second Convention deliberately, clearly, and definitely states, as it does, that it substitutes certain articles for other articles, what you ought to do is to paste these articles over the articles which are repealed and leave all the rest standing. I think it is perfectly clear, in these circumstances, that the preamble remains—that preamble which is the justification of the suzerainty and which is also the foundation of the independence of the South African Republic. 'Oh, but,' says the right honourable gentleman, 'there was a black line round the preamble in one of the documents which was submitted to the Boer deputation.' I do not think it is fair, when we know nothing about the circumstances, at all events, of those interviews, to construe formal documents by inferential statements, *obiter dicta*, memoranda which are not contained in those documents. There are heaps of answers that might be made to the argument derived from the fact that in the draft of the

second Convention which was submitted to the Boers a black line was drawn round the preamble of the first Convention ; but the answer which I make—I do not know whether it is the true one, but it seems to me to be common sense—is this, that in drawing up the second Convention there was no room for the preamble. The second Convention had nothing to do with the preamble ; the second Convention substituted articles by which the suzerainty was limited. The preamble remaining, it was not necessary to put that preamble once more in the second Convention. I am arguing with a lawyer, but it seems to me—being a layman I do not want to push a legal argument too far—that if you did put the preamble into the Convention of 1884 you would have made nonsense of it ; it will not read ; there is no reason for putting it in. It does not follow that because you did not put it in in 1884 therefore you repealed it in 1884. That is the conclusion that was left on my mind when I first came to the consideration of this subject. If this uncertainty—if there is any uncertainty—has produced misunderstanding in the minds of the Boers, or in the mind of anybody else, what is the moral ? The moral is that in diplomacy, as in most other things, you should not only mean what you say, but you should say what you mean. That being the state of the case, what happened in 1897 ? We got a dispatch from the Transvaal Government once more making the same proposal which had been made in 1884 and summarily rejected by Lord Derby. Once more they proposed that we should enter into an arrangement with them that all differences should be subjected to arbitration by a foreign State ; which was again the assertion of precisely the position which had been rejected in 1884. Sir, it was a challenge to us, and if we had not taken notice of that challenge it would have been said of us that tacitly we had done away with the suzerainty which up to that moment we believed to exist. That is the justification, whatever may have been the effect, of the introduction of the word ‘ suzerainty ’ ; that is the justification of it in the minds of Her Majesty’s Government. Our hands were forced. We

had been content, as our predecessors had been content, to speak of 'paramountey' because we supposed that it was less irritating than the word 'suzerainty.' That suzerainty was challenged in the substance; then we thought it necessary to reassert the name also. Here is another point which I particularly wish to impress upon the mind of the right honourable gentleman. How is suzerainty an obstacle to a settlement? I must assume he thinks that the mention of suzerainty is extremely irritating to the Boers. Granted, for the sake of argument. It was made in October 1897. What happened? Did they immediately get up in a tantrum and make a strong reply? Not a bit of it. They allowed the whole controversy to lapse for six months. It was six months before we heard a single word in reply. When we made our second reply an interval of five months was allowed to elapse. It was nineteen months after the word had been introduced that they agreed, apparently most willingly, to the conference at Bloemfontein, and through the whole of that conference, from the beginning to the end, the President never put forward the question of suzerainty. The only points on which he was apparently anxious were the question of indemnity, the question of arbitration, and his claim to have entire control of Swaziland. I think, therefore, even if it were granted that it was a mistake to introduce this question at all, the right honourable gentleman must admit that it could not have a serious effect on the subsequent negotiations. The second point of objection which the right honourable gentleman has taken to our policy is the publication of Sir Alfred Milner's dispatch. Will the House consider for a moment who Sir Alfred Milner is? What were the circumstances of his appointment? The moment that appointment was made, by common acclamation from everybody—every organ of public opinion, to whichever party they belonged—Sir Alfred Milner's appointment was hailed as the most admirable appointment that could possibly have been made. It was recognised that he was a most distinguished public servant; everything he had done he had done well. It was said he was a man of

great discretion and judgment ; it was said he was a man cautious even to an extreme ; it was believed that going to that country in difficult and complicated circumstances he, at all events, would not err on the side of temerity. I believe Sir Alfred Milner belongs, politically, to the party opposite. It is just as good for my argument whether he does or not. I thought he belonged to the party opposite, but I do not attach any importance to that, because I believe neither party, for their own credit, would ever think of party considerations in selecting an agent for so important a position. But having selected an agent you have got to trust him ; you have got to assume, after he has been on the spot a sufficient time, that his opinion is worthy of the most careful consideration, and you must not in any way instruct him contrary to his opinion unless you have most complete assurance to the contrary. Well, when we were publishing an important Blue Book, when matters were critical, I had not at the time any opinion on the situation from Sir Alfred Milner that I could publish. Suppose I had published an important Blue Book without an opinion from him : what would have been said ? Would not the first thing I should have been asked have been : ‘ Where is Sir Alfred Milner’s opinion ? If he has given an opinion, why have you suppressed it ? Why have you acted without his opinion ? ’ That would be a most reasonable and proper question. Therefore I telegraphed to Sir Alfred Milner asking him to give his views for their publication. He sent the dispatch : I published it as I received it. What is suggested that I should have done ? Is it suggested that I should have suppressed it ? What a howl of indignation would have come from the opposite benches if I had done that. Why, sir, if I had disagreed with what Sir Alfred Milner said in that dispatch, I doubt very much whether I should have been justified in the circumstances of the case, considering the character and position of Sir Alfred Milner—I doubt whether I should have been justified in withholding from the House the opinion he had expressed.

MR. MACNEILL : What about General Butler’s dispatches ?

MR. CHAMBERLAIN : That is a foolish and rather unnecessary intervention. I published, indeed, a dispatch from General Butler on purpose to show what his opinion was. I had other dispatches from General Butler marked 'Confidential,' some of them involving personal questions which could not, in the public service, have been presented. But I myself particularly insisted that one dispatch from General Butler should be published in order that his views should be known, although I do not consider that General Butler, who had just gone to the Cape in a military capacity, had at all the same claim to have his opinion represented to the House as Sir Alfred Milner had. When I was interrupted I was saying that clearly it was my duty, except in some very exceptional circumstances, to publish Sir Alfred Milner's dispatch, sent for the purpose, even if I had disagreed with it. But, sir, I agree with every word of it. How can it be supposed for a moment that there is a single thing which Sir Alfred Milner has done, whether he did it, by the necessity of the case, without consultation with me, or whether he did it after consultation with me, for which I do not take the fullest responsibility ? But then, I think, the contention is that there is a particular passage in Sir Alfred Milner's dispatch which I should have suppressed. If I had suppressed it, it would have had nothing whatever to do with the controversy. It is not an offence to the Boers ; it does not affect the settlement with them. If there is any criticism to be cast upon it, it is that it is unwise to give publicity to statements which reflect in any way upon the loyalty of any of our own colonies. But, whatever view you take of it, it cannot, at all events, be contended that the publication of that passage in the dispatch had anything whatever to do with exasperating our relations with the Transvaal. What were the words Sir Alfred Milner used ? He said : 'The Dutch Press in the Transvaal,'—everybody knows the nature of the Dutch press in the Transvaal—'and not in the Transvaal only'—that 'refers to a portion of the press in the colony,—'preaches openly and constantly the doctrine of a Republic embracing all South Africa, and supports it by

menacing references to the armament of the Transvaal, its alliance with the Orange Free State, and the active sympathy which in case of war it would receive from a section of Her Majesty's subjects. I regret to say that this doctrine, supported as it is by a ceaseless stream of malignant lies about the intentions of the British Government, is producing a great effect upon our Dutch fellow-colonists.' Sir, was that true? Yes, it was. Then, if it was true, does any one mean to tell me it was dignified, or proper, or right, or wise to play the part of the ostrich, to bury our head in the sand and conceal what is a most important element of the situation. That, then, is all that I have to say in defence of our action in publishing the dispatch of Sir Alfred Milner. Now, sir, I come to the franchise negotiations. Of course, the House is fully aware of the state of things which preceded those negotiations. Matters, which had never been satisfactory with regard to the treatment of the Uitlanders, were going from bad to worse. Not a single grievance had been remedied since the raid. On the contrary, additional grievances had been created and the old grievances had been increased. The last grievance of all was connected with the Edgar murder. I regretted to hear my right honourable friend the member for Bodmin on a previous occasion making apologies for this transaction. It was murder, and if it had stood alone it was not more, perhaps, than a murder in any other civilised country. But what is serious was the way in which the Government treated the murderer; the way in which they provoked and then broke up agitations on behalf of the victim and on behalf of justice and fair play. The end of that was a petition from the Uitlanders to the Government, that a petition came to us from the Uitlanders. Her Majesty's Government examined the petition, found the grievances substantial, and found the charges proved. They then wrote what I think must be admitted to have been a most moderate dispatch. No one has yet laid finger on a word in that dispatch which could be described as provocative. In that dispatch we said that we could not permanently ignore the conditions to which our

fellow-subjects were reduced, and then we suggested a conference, which was anticipated by a suggestion from President Steyn, and which took place at Bloemfontein, to discuss the question. I have seen complaints made that here was a failure on the part of the British Government to conduct these negotiations properly, and that we were in the wrong to put the franchise first. But what was the alternative? There were only two things we could have done. We did not pretend that we had then, any more than we had at any other time, that we had a right of interference in the internal affairs of the Republic; but what we did contend was that we had a right to secure justice for our fellow-subjects, and we thought that the best way to secure that justice would be to enable them to secure justice for themselves; and, above all, we thought that it would be a great advantage in future if Her Majesty's Government were discharged from the task of taking up any future grievances, and could say: 'You have your own Parliament, in which you are represented. Go to that Parliament and represent your views and gain redress in a constitutional way.' There were only two alternatives—we could put forward, as we did, this franchise proposal, which has always been wrongly described, as I put it to the right honourable gentleman yesterday, as a mere franchise proposal, but which was really a proposal for substantial representation—such a representation as would enable the Uitlanders to have a fair amount of influence upon the legislation of the country in which they lived. And we had the alternative between putting that forward and between claiming redress for every grievance, for scores of grievances—which would have involved interference in almost every detail of Transvaal administration—the courts of justice, the magistrates, the appointment of officials, bribery and corruption, monopolies, taxation, and matters dealing with civil and political rights. There were heaps of other grievances every one of which we should have had to raise if we had gone straight to grievances instead of taking up a method by which all grievances can be redressed. My right honourable friend the member for Montrose has

very properly said in one of his speeches that if the Government had done that they would have courted defeat. Yes, does any one suppose that President Kruger, who refused our mild proposition for the gradual settlement—it would not have been immediate, it would have taken years fully to arrive at—does anybody suppose that if he rejected that he would have accepted from us an interference, an intermeddling control and revision of almost every detail of his whole administration? Then my right honourable friend the member for Montrose made a charge against us which is clearly not justified. He said that after that we had shifted our ground. Sir, we never shifted our ground from the first minute to the last moment of the day of the ultimatum; our ground has still been the same. We never put forward new proposals. The proposals were exactly the same as they always had been—a substantial and immediate representation at any moment to put an end to the immediate tension and crisis.

MR. MORLEY (Montrose Burghs): I think the right honourable gentleman will not deny that what I said was true. What I mean was that in the dispatch with regard to the franchise proposals, he added what I regarded as a fatal sentence, that there were other questions which were to be settled concurrently with the franchise.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: No, sir, that was the Bloemfontein Conference. If you will read the protocol of that conference, you will find that that was mentioned and explained. Let me point out what the position was. Sir Alfred Milner proposed a moderate and substantial representation as practically a cure—not an immediate, but a slow and gradual cure—for all the grievances of the Uitlanders. Then he proposed arbitration for the settlement of all differences of interpretation of the Convention, and the third thing was a friendly conference to settle certain matters which were outside the Convention, and which were not subjects for arbitration. Let me tell the right honourable gentleman what they were. I only know of two of them. One was compensation for the Edgar murder. That might have

been arbitrated upon ; but the other and more important matter was the treatment of British Indian subjects. That was unfortunately outside the Convention, and it had to be dealt with as a separate matter. That was not a question on which we were going to arbitrate, especially because the whole question of the treatment of the coloured races in South Africa is a very difficult one, and we have to make allowances for the prejudices both in the Transvaal and in our own colonies. We therefore thought that an informal conference would be much better. Those are the three points, and I say again that I am glad to have this opportunity of removing misconception. Now, sir, how have these proposals of ours been described upon the other side ? I take any quotations from the other side because I want to minimise any difference that may still remain. The honourable and learned gentleman the member for South Shields says they were moderate—I agree with him—even to the extent of being useless if President Kruger had had the cleverness to accept them in full. That is, at all events, an arguable view. But I admit I am much more afraid of the charge being proved against me of being too moderate than I am of any charge being proved against me of being excessive. Well, sir, these proposals which were made involved no danger to the independence of the Transvaal. None whatever. They would not have affected President Kruger's personal authority. They would only have proceeded very slowly towards that equality which he himself promised and to which we all look as the ideal for the whole of South Africa. The result of the Bloemfontein Conference was to show the spirit of our opponents. President Kruger refused these proposals and brought forward a proposal of his own which on the face of it was so ludicrous that it could not be considered ; and that showed for the first time perhaps clearly that there was a gulf between us and that there was an essential difference. While President Kruger might be willing to give us names, he was not willing to give us substance. After the Bloemfontein Conference the matter went on ; three futile and inadequate proposals

followed each other. The right honourable gentleman made a great deal of the statement of mine that I was happy to see in each an advance upon the other. It was a difference between tweedledum and tweedledee.

AN HON. MEMBER : Retrospective ?

MR. CHAMBERLAIN : Yes, I do not say there were not some points of difference between them ; but the last of these proposals, like the first, when it came to be examined, did not give the slightest possibility for hope of any substantial or immediate representation. Then came the first real proposal of a seven years' franchise. It did appear to me to make an advance. I did not say it was a basis of settlement, but that it made me hope that it might be a basis of settlement. I saw in it a distinct advance on anything which had been proposed before. I hoped it would turn out to be a genuine reform, and I proposed an inquiry into the matter. I asked that President Kruger would be good enough to consult with Sir Alfred Milner before the law was passed, thinking that it would be much better that we should come to an agreement before the law was passed. President Kruger refused again in the spirit in which he has always approached this matter, and the law was passed. In the dispatch of July 27, which was communicated on August 2, we asked for a commission of experts to examine the law and to make reports to their respective governments, and that, if it were found that they considered that the law did not give the substantial representation for which we asked, we should make further representations to President Kruger in the hope that he would assent to an alteration. What was the answer to this request ? The answer to that dispatch was written on August 12, and it was held back because of the *pourparlers* going on, and it was only delivered on September 1. It was a dispatch refusing this innocent commission of inquiry into the conditions of the franchise. And why did President Kruger refuse it ? Not upon a minor point, but because it was derogatory to the independence of the Transvaal. If it was—if President Kruger believed it was—it was of course a flat refusal, and we could not

expect him to do anything derogatory to his own independence. If that was his opinion on September 1, and that was a genuine answer, we had a right to take it as a flat refusal. Now the *pourparlers* went on between Mr. Greene and Mr. Smuts, but so little did the Transvaal like this proposal of the commission, so anxious were they for some reason or other to avoid it, that the whole object of the *pourparlers* was to see whether they would be allowed to substitute the new proposals for what had been previously talked about, the commission. That was the distinct object. In order that they might get rid of the inquiry they made this proposal. About the proposal there is a good deal which has hitherto been entirely unexplained. I am not going to speak of the discrepancies which arose between Mr. Smuts, the Attorney-General, and Mr. Greene. You recollect that they conversed together and each took his own notes, and there is always a possibility of a little misunderstanding under such circumstances. I am sure there is no one in this House who suffers more from misunderstanding than myself. I do not therefore rest upon that, but it was a very curious thing that when the proposal was officially communicated it certainly omitted several very important points, which Mr. Greene believed were offered to him by Mr. Smuts, and I confess that the probabilities of the case are that Mr. Greene's recollection will be accurate in regard to a matter of that kind. He would hardly suppose these advantages were offered, unless, at all events, they had been mentioned in the conversation. But, however that may be, serious discrepancies appeared in the official proposal, which was not as favourable as the proposal which we imagined was coming to us. And here I come to another stage, in regard to which there has hitherto been an apparent difference between us and some of our critics. It is said that when this proposal came to us we refused it, we slammed the door. The right honourable gentleman the member for Monmouthshire said, 'You slammed one door and refused to open another.' We did not slam the door, we did not refuse the proposal, but we accepted it. We

accepted all that part which referred, of course, to our demands. We agreed to accept the five years' settlement as a basis subject to an inquiry, which as they objected to a joint inquiry should be a unilateral inquiry. They attached conditions. Now what were those conditions? The first was that we should agree to a scheme of arbitration. We accepted it. We had been negotiating on that basis. We proposed it at Bloemfontein. Of course we accepted it. They then proposed that we should not insist upon our assertion of suzerainty, and we should tacitly agree to drop the controversy. We accepted it. I am not certain that I should have accepted it if I had not been bound by my previous utterances. In the dispatch which closed the old controversy of the suzerainty we had said of our own motion, without any reference to them, that, having laid our views before them, having declared that we adhered to them, we did not intend to enforce them any further. I referred back to that dispatch and in so doing I accepted that condition. So two of the conditions were at once accepted. The next condition was this—the right honourable gentleman did not state it accurately last night. He said the condition was that we should not make this a precedent for further intervention. If that had been all I do not think we should have refused it; but what they asked in addition was that there should be no further intervention. With our experience of the Transvaal, with the knowledge that the next day some difficulty of a similar character might arise, with the knowledge that promises made might not be kept, with the knowledge that the anticipations we had formed might be disappointed, and that we should have all the trouble again in a week's time, we were under no circumstances and at no time to practise any intervention. That was impossible. If the right honourable gentleman will now consider he will see that our reply to the Transvaal dispatch was the acceptance of every point except that, instead of giving a pledge that we would never interfere again, we expressed a hope, an honest and earnest hope, that if these measures were carried out there

would be no reason for our intervention. I cannot explain to the House why, having got that dispatch from the Government, the Transvaal went back on their own proposal. We might at once have gone into a commission either unilateral or joint, as they preferred, in order to discover whether there were any pitfalls in the proposals. Personally I believe that in the interval a malign influence appeared in our transactions with the Transvaal, and that communications were received by the Transvaal from their advisers—I must not be misunderstood, I am not alluding to foreign powers but to advisers of the Transvaal. I make that explanation because it struck me as necessary while I was speaking, as I am not going to mention names. I do believe that influential advisers of the Transvaal must have interfered and got them to withdraw the offer which, at all events, I hoped might have prevented this crisis, or at least have lessened the tension which existed. Then what happened? The Transvaal, without reason as I conceive, formally withdrew their own proposal. They asserted that we had refused their conditions, although they could not prove it. They withdrew their proposal and they went back to a proposal which was then, I think, a month or six weeks old, and asked us once more to engage in a commission which might have met and lasted for weeks, but which in the end was certain to have one, only one, result, because in the meantime we had ascertained from our own examination of the provisions of the Bill that as it stood it was perfectly inadequate to give us the substantial representation we asked. Let me again quote the words of the honourable and learned gentleman the member for South Shields. He is a lawyer and quite competent to consider a subject of this kind. He said, ‘I have gone carefully through the proposed Franchise Bill, by which President Kruger claims to have given a seven years’ franchise to the Uitlanders. I do not hesitate to say that that Act is a grotesque and palpable sham. I doubt whether two hundred or three hundred Uitlanders could be found who could honestly fulfil its conditions.’ I agree entirely

with every word of that passage. Is it contended by anybody, in face of that statement made by a gentleman who, as I say, is not a member of my party, and who is well qualified to speak—is it contended that we ought to have gone back, after all these three or four months' delay, to an inquiry which could only have been proposed in order to gain time while ammunition and arms and food were pouring into the Transvaal, and meanwhile the unrest and distress of the Rand were increasing every day? I do not see how it would have been possible to maintain the condition of things which thus obtained in the Transvaal for the time that would have been requisite for such an inquiry. This withdrawal happened on September 8. The right honourable gentleman, having first said that we slammed the door, went on to say that we had not opened another door. Not only, as I have said, was the door not slammed then, but it was not slammed afterwards. Why does not the right honourable gentleman say that at all events, another construction might be put upon the delay which took place? It is true we sent an interim dispatch to say we could not accept the proposal, the belated proposal, for a new inquiry into an Act which we knew to be insufficient and inadequate, and that under these circumstances we should have to formulate our own conclusions. We said that under the circumstances it was useless to proceed, useless to argue with people who had then made up their minds. Suppose they had changed their minds. I will not say, I will not even imagine, what we might have done under the circumstances. What would the right honourable gentleman have done if the Transvaal Government, having changed their minds, had proposed to us a five years' franchise and all the other conditions, and we had refused? Would he have denounced us then? Would he not have denounced us with some reason, and should we not have had a very difficult task to defend ourselves? Having got from the Transvaal a statement that went back on their own proposals and said they would only put forward proposals that we had declared to be absolutely inadequate, was it a closing of the door to the new propositions

from the Transvaal to say that we could not pursue the controversy on those lines ? It is perfectly monstrous and farcical. I suggest to the right honourable gentleman that a charitable construction of our action would be that the delay which took place in presenting what must necessarily have been an ultimatum was not altogether unconnected with the hope that the Transvaal at the last moment might make some change in their attitude towards us. Well, but over and above that the communication was delayed by other reasons. President Steyn had entered into correspondence with Sir Alfred Milner. I admit that the correspondence did not offer from the first much hope of anything like a satisfactory settlement, and it became perfectly evident in the course of it that President Steyn was not really proceeding in a way that was likely to have any good result. [I think I interrupted the right honourable gentleman on this point last night. At all events, I have now got the words.] I find President Steyn said that without the withdrawal of the troops on both sides, and an undertaking on the part of Her Majesty's Government not to increase them, it would be futile to attempt to make or obtain suggestions or proposals for a solution of the difficulty. What proposal could have been more one-sided than that if we would withdraw our troops the South African Republics would withdraw theirs ? With little transport and impedimenta which usually accompany European armies, the Boer troops could be easily mobilised. That is not the case with British troops. If we moved our troops to the coast, it would take a considerable time to get them back again, and if the negotiations had fallen through our colony would have been overrun. I do not believe President Steyn had the least idea that we would accept his proposal. The right honourable gentleman says : ' You never treated President Steyn fairly, because you would not indicate your proposals.' But in this final statement of his he does not talk of our proposals. What he says is that it would be futile for him to attempt to make proposals for the solution of the difficulty. No doubt what he contemplated was that, if other things were satis-

factory, we would withdraw our troops and put ourselves into a position of inferiority to the Boers should hostilities take place, and he would make proposals to us in return for that advantage. Heaven knows what they would be! We have no reason to believe they would have been satisfactory.

Now I am coming to the end, much to my own satisfaction, and I am inclined to put this question to every fair-minded and impartial man in the House. I am not pretending that there may not be something in all these transactions on which there may not be reasonable ground for criticism. But I ask in this long history which I have given of facts, dispatches, and intentions, is there anywhere any sign of provocation, blood-guiltiness, desire for war, or of a conspiracy to bring about war? I repudiate such an accusation. I am sure it has been based where it has been made on a misunderstanding of what has passed and a misapprehension of facts. I am much more afraid of being told that I have been patient even to the point of weakness, that I have been moderate in the extreme. I confess that my only justification in such a case would be that, after all, although I do not hold the interests of peace as supreme, they are the main object of every British statesman. We have been accused of failure to send reinforcements to the Cape and elsewhere as the matter became critical. That accusation has been made from the last quarter from which I should have expected it. I do not think it came with a good grace from the benches opposite. That, at all events, must be admitted. But if it comes from this side let me say in the first place that during these negotiations, and even before that, the garrison of the South African colonies, which was originally something like 3000, had been increased to 10,000, and from that to 25,000, at which it stands now. We have gradually increased our resources there with the object of at least putting ourselves in a proper defensive position. We were pressed thereto by our own colonists and by the Government of Natal. If any Government deserves, in this matter, our gratitude and consideration, it is the Government of the colony of Natal. Never before

in the history of the difficulties in South Africa has the Government of the colony so completely identified itself with the mother country, and there are strong reasons which should have pulled them in an opposite direction. They are the people, we have seen, who were the first to bear the brunt of the attack. They were, at the time when the negotiations were going on and when at any moment 'a bolt from the blue' in the shape of an ultimatum might have produced war—they were defenceless and open to attack. Yet they have thrown in their lot, heart and soul, with the mother country, and certainly they are entitled to our lasting gratitude. If it be said that after all, even having done what we believed to be best, on the advice which we received, humanly speaking, having taken sufficient and necessary precautions for a purely defensive attitude—if it be asked, 'Why did you not send an army corps earlier?' I might allude for a moment to the question of popular support upon which the right honourable gentleman was rather sarcastic yesterday. I think we speak of different things. When we are speaking of popular support, we are not thinking, as he appears to be, of votes or strength given to a particular Government. We are thinking of the interests of the country. Sir, a great war such as this is not one that any Government or statesman can contemplate without serious misgivings. To carry on such a war with so many difficulties, in such complications, with a country seriously divided by a strict party line—that would be bad for the national interests. I do not see how a Government could satisfactorily prosecute a war under such conditions, hampered and embarrassed at every turn. I do not see how—what is far more important—they could ever arrange a satisfactory peace. It has been our earnest desire to carry with us as far as possible both parties in the country, to reduce our differences, and, if we have differences, not to exaggerate them. If we had proposed a month ago to send an army corps to South Africa and come here with proposals to spend a million and a half on animals and eight and a half millions more on the necessary preparations, would

the party opposite as a whole have supported us? October 6, three days before the ultimatum, declared that there was no need for military preparations. . . . If a month or more ago we had sent any large body of troops to South Africa, honourable gentlemen opposite, holding the opinions they did, must have opposed us, and the result would have been a party division which would have shown the country to have been seriously divided in a time of great crisis; the Liberal party would have been more or less alienated, and our position in future negotiations seriously hampered. . . . Sir, we do not pretend that we are infallible, any more than any previous Government, but we do claim that as much as any previous Government we are anxious for the honour and the interests of this country. And, sir, we think it is in consequence of that we have received the great measure of support from the great mass of our countrymen, and that we have seen that magnificent demonstration of loyalty, and not only of loyalty, but of sympathy with our object, which has been made by our self-governing colonies.. Throughout these negotiations we have put first the objects we had in view, of maintaining the equality of the two races, of securing protection for British subjects, and to confirm and uphold the suzerainty of the Queen. We have been, as I have shown, as anxious for peace as any man on the other side of the House or in the country, but we have held that there are things which are even more important than peace itself, and in order to attain peace it is sometimes necessary to face the contingency of war. If our endeavour to maintain peace we have shown the utmost conciliation, we have shown endless patience. We have run some risk, but we have never from the first to the last for the sake of peace been prepared either to betray our countrymen or to allow the paramountcy, or whatever you call it, to be taken from us. President Kruger has settled the question; he has appealed to the God of battles, and I say with all reverence and gravity we accept the challenge, believing that we have our quarrel just.

THE "SOUTH AFRICAN WAR: 'TRUSTEES OF A FEDERATION'

HOUSE OF COMMONS, FEBRUARY 5, 1900

[The occasion on which this speech was delivered was an amendment on the Address moved by Lord E. Fitzmaurice, condemning the Government for their want of foresight and judgment in their conduct of South African affairs since 1895, and in their preparations for the war. It was a dark moment in the history of the war—and of the country. The 'black week' of Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso was fresh in the public mind. Ladysmith, Kimberley, and Mafeking were all besieged, and their fate still hung in the balance. Abroad, the enemies of England exulted. In these circumstances the attacks on the Government were renewed which had practically ceased in response to the Colonial Secretary's appeal after the delivery of the Boer ultimatum, and in these circumstances Mr. Chamberlain spoke, following Sir William Harcourt. His speech was described at the time as 'conspicuous for dignity, candour, breadth of view, clearness of purpose, and silent disdain of the trivial sophistries wherewith little men prove their incapacity to treat great affairs.' Its effect was additionally to pull together a nation not disheartened by disaster, but anxious. The reference to the help given from the Dominions, and to the position of England 'as trustees not merely of a kingdom but of a federation,' is significant.]

EVERY man who addresses the House in this debate must form his own judgment of what it is fitting and useful and patriotic to say on such an occasion, at such a time, and in such an assembly. The right honourable gentleman who has just sat down has no doubt formed his own standard. I can only say that I think to-morrow the country will differ from that standard. What is the situation? We have reached a critical stage of the war. The situation is undoubtedly serious, although I hesitate to adopt the extreme language of some speakers. I do not believe that the country is in danger. I think such a phrase is excessive, and I think it is unwise to give to others the opportunity of quoting us when we depreciate ourselves. But undoubtedly there is sorrow in many homes. Do you suppose that not all of us are sensible of it? There is anxiety in all our hearts, and there is, above all, in the mind of the people an overwhelming desire that every nerve shall be strained to bring

this war to a triumphant conclusion. The country is in need of guidance and of encouragement from this House, not from one party alone. The country asks from all of us a recognition of past mistakes and reassurance as to the future. The attitude of the country has been admirable. It has extorted the approval even of the most hostile critics. Throughout it has shown no desire to find scapegoats, whether among generals or among Ministers. It has shown that it expects all of us to work together, with a single mind, to discover the causes of our mistakes, to find out the remedy, to profit by those mistakes, and to co-operate heartily, without regard to persons or to parties, in securing the end which we all have in view. That is the situation, and what is the message that the right honourable gentleman brings to his countrymen? Whom is he addressing to-night? This House? Yes; but what beside? He is addressing all those who have suffered in this war, all who have suffered in this country, all who have suffered in our colonies in Africa, in the Cape and in Natal, where the greatest sufferings have been loyally and readily endured in the confidence that this country will see the matter to the end. And he is also addressing those spectators abroad to whom he referred in his closing passages. And to them, what does he say? He enters upon a critical examination, characteristic in this, that it omits almost everything that we think of importance, of all that preceded this war—and with what object? In order to indicate to all these people that the war is an immoral war; an unjust war, that all these sacrifices have been thrown away, that the splendid offers and assistance given to us by our colonies have been futile and wasted, even if they have not been absolutely injurious; and he finds arguments for those who gloat over the misfortunes of the country. That is not all. He has embarked on a personal and historical retrospect of the situation, and of the events which led up to and accompanied the Majuba Convention. Unlike those of his colleagues at that time who still remain alive, he not only offers justification, which perhaps may well be offered, for the course

which was then taken, but in the light of all that has happened since he gives us to understand that if he had influence and power he would do the same thing again. And in the middle of this war, while its fortunes are still hanging in the balance, that is the future which he offers to the people of this country and to our colonial fellow-citizens. One more remark I must make about the speech of the right honourable gentleman, because he thought it appropriate to this debate and to this particular occasion to refer back to the committee of inquiry into the raid, which was closed by his suggestion about three years ago, and to a speech which I made at that time, which also is now three years old, in order to base upon that a suggestion that that committee should be reopened. All I say with regard to that to-night is that the matter is down for consideration on the motion of the honourable member for Merthyr, and when that comes forward I will say whatever I may think it necessary to say upon the subject. The right honourable gentleman will forgive me if, to-night at any rate, I fail to follow him, because I think I have a higher and a more important duty. How shall I deal with these criticisms against the policy of the Government previous to the commencement of the war? I might leave honourable and right honourable gentlemen opposite to answer one another. I might leave the honourable and learned gentleman the member for South Shields to answer the honourable and learned gentleman the member for Dumfries. I might leave the honourable baronet the member for Berwick to answer the right honourable gentleman who has just sat down. I might refer to the fact that those honourable gentlemen who have taken this critical view of the proceedings of the Government have not added one atom, one iota, one new fact, or one new argument or suggestion to what they said at great length, and to which we replied at equal length, in the short session of October last. And why are we now, after this House has decided, after the country has decided, again to be dragged into that issue when we have still more important and urgent matters to discuss? But, although I am not

inclined to any repetition, although I refuse absolutely to be drawn into a discussion of petty details, I do feel that those who are the losers by this war, those especially who have lost in person or friends or relatives, are entitled to have it insisted upon again and again, whenever the question is raised that this war is just and necessary. I want the House for a few minutes to look at the matter broadly—not to stop to consider the shreds and patches of the subject, but the general drift of events and the general current of policy. We have to watch the river as it flows to the sea, and not to waste time in paddling in the eddies which seem to, but do not, delay its course. Speaking from that point of view, I say that the issues between Boer and Briton, between this country and the South African Republics, are great issues, are real issues, are not technical issues—that they do not stand upon the trivialities of debate, and are not to be considered as if it were a civil case in a civil court. The right honourable gentleman, I will do him the justice to say, said that these issues cannot be discussed, as they are sought to be discussed by the terms of this amendment, by confining yourselves strictly to the year 1895, when this Government became responsible for South African affairs. No, sir, these issues existed. The root causes of this disagreement were there long before 1895, even before 1881. The raid, the Bloemfontein Conference, the franchise question—all these are not, as the right honourable gentleman appears to think they are, causes. They are only incidents and consequences of the disagreement which has been going on for a long time. This difference, this vital difference, did not begin with Majuba, but it was intensified by the policy of Majuba. That, I think, most of us, who, as the right honourable gentleman says I was, were personally and particularly responsible for that policy—even we are unable to resist the evidence of history, the evidence of all that has passed since. We cannot fail to see that, as a policy, the policy of magnanimity was a mistake. What happened? The right honourable gentleman jumped from Majuba to the raid, I think, and he omitted all the intervening time.

Why, before the ink of the Majuba Convention was dry the Boers began to try and break that Convention. Why, sir, the whole history of our relations is a history of this continual effort to get out of the obligations which they had accepted, and which were the conditions of the magnanimity to which I have referred. How otherwise could it be when you think of the facts? Mr. Gladstone was not unfriendly to the Boers. Mr. Gladstone was the head of the Government which made the Majuba Convention; and yet, within three years of the signing of that Convention, Mr. Gladstone was obliged to take all those terrible risks upon which the right honourable gentleman who has just sat down dilated—the risk of civil war, the risk of Dutch opposition, the risk of serious armament and cost to this country—and to send a military expedition to force and compel the Boers to observe the conditions of the Majuba Convention. That is only one illustration. What happened in the time of the late Government? What happened when Lord Loch went to Pretoria? The history of that proceeding has never been written, and perhaps never will be. But it is well known that affairs at that time were in a most critical position, and that military movements were taking place in consequence. I come down later. Well, after the raid, and when we had been in office only a few months, there arose the question of the drifts. What happened then? We were advised and urged to send an ultimatum which must have led to war, if President Kruger had not given way. We were urged and advised and pressed to send it—by whom? By the Cape Government, in which Mr. Schreiner, the present Prime Minister, was then Attorney-General, and not merely a consenting party, but an advising party.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Hear, hear, hear.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: The honourable gentleman opposite will excuse me on this occasion if I think the subject is too grave to give him the notice which no doubt he expects. I have referred to the drifts. I want to refer to another incident which also occurred in the time of the late Government to which I myself attach very considerable importance.

I refer to that admirable dispatch of Lord Ripon's, a portion of which has been published in the Blue-book with his consent. I may be told that that dispatch was not sent. No; and if I wished to make a controversial point I should ask—Why it was sent to Lord Loch, the High Commissioner, and why he was afterwards told to withhold it? But that is not necessary for my purpose. What I want to point out is that the late Government, just before we came into office, had found that it was necessary and right, in spite of the limitations of the Convention, to interest themselves in the affairs of the Transvaal. And I want to point out that their remedy for the difficulties which then existed, and which I found confronting me when I came into office, was a five years' franchise. That was the remedy which we borrowed from our predecessors in office, and which I suppose was good enough in their hands, although it is condemned in ours. I think I have stated enough to show that the difficulties between ourselves and the Transvaal were not the work of one Government. Indeed, I should not myself say they are the work of any Government. They are inherent in the circumstances; in the great difference which exists between Boer character and British character; between Boer civilisation and British civilisation; and between Boer education and British education. There you will find the root cause of all that has happened. What has been the Boer policy? I am not talking of conspiracy; but what has been the Boer aspiration from first to last? It has been to get rid of every shred and vestige of British supremacy, and substitute for it a Boer supremacy. I do not say that at all times, or from the first, the Boers contemplated that this was to be obtained by force of arms, although they have never shrunk, in my opinion, from indicating that they were ready when the proper time came to resort to arms. But what the Boers hoped for, was that what they could not get from the Government they would get from the Opposition. I am not speaking now of the present Opposition. But if any Government had the courage to meet their assaults on the Convention, the Boers trusted to

the working of our party politics to give them the victory in the end. And this must also be remarked. It was a contest for supremacy ; but for what kind of supremacy ? The supremacy of the Boers means, as we know, the inferiority of every other race. Our supremacy, so far as we have been able to use it, has been used and will be used in order to secure the equality of the white races and justice for the black. Well, sir, there was the issue. It was a contest for supremacy, dating back I know not for how many years, and for a different kind of civilisation. That issue had got to be tried ; that battle had got to be fought ; one or other party had to give way if peace was to be preserved. Does not the House think now that in this matter we may perhaps have drifted too long ? It is easy to be wise after the event. But our hesitation—again I am speaking of no particular Government and of no particular period—has had the effect, year by year, of strengthening the determination and the power of the Boers to resist us. When we came into office we felt very quickly that a solution must be found. Things could not go on with a rapid and daily increase in the hostility between the two races. That was the worst feature of the situation—the growing feeling of dissatisfaction and irritation between peoples who ought to have lived amicably together and who had, as a rule, previously done so. The time had come when in some way or other this long-standing difference must be settled. We believed then and we hoped to the last that a peaceful settlement could be attained. We hoped that when President Kruger saw how little it was we asked, and how determined we were to have it, he would give way. I take all the blame that the House considers is due for such a belief. If you say that our preparations were not sufficient, that we had not enough troops there when war broke out, that we had not a sufficiently large force there for defensive action, that no doubt is due to the fact that we hoped for peace, that we were determined to exhaust every means for securing peace and to do nothing that we thought would seriously endanger it. You may blame us, and perhaps rightly, that throughout this business we have been

too anxious for peace. But no impartial man, no man who knows the facts, can truly and properly blame us for having been too eager for war. Our efforts were fruitless. Our objects were reasonable. They were the same objects that the late Government had. Our demands were moderate, even to inefficiency. They were the same demands that right honourable gentlemen opposite were prepared to make. The possibility of a settlement was open up to the last moment before the ultimatum was delivered; and the breach did not come from us. What more would you have had us do? What more would any friend of peace have had us do? There is only one alternative course to the one we pursued, and that is suggested in the speeches of some at least of the honourable gentlemen opposite. What they say is this: 'When you prayed, when you begged, when you supplicated, we were with you; we even looked on without opposition when you pressed, when you urged, when you insisted. But there we stopped. You may do all this, but you must not compel by force. The moment it appeared that President Kruger was not to be moved by your supplications, was not frightened by your insistence, at that moment you should have retired from the scene, you should have scuttled, you should have surrendered the interests for which you are the trustees—the interests, not of the nation alone, but of the Empire.' A good deal has been said in this debate about Dutch opinion. I think the leader of the Opposition said something—I do not know whether he referred to the Colonial Office, or Sir Alfred Milner, or the Government—but he said something about the coolness between ourselves and the representatives of Dutch opinion. I know of no coolness except so far as that arises necessarily from differences of opinion. But I will say this about the Dutch. I appreciate, as every one must do, most heartily and sincerely the difficulties in which our loyal Dutch fellow-subjects have found themselves placed in this situation. Their loyalty is more precious than ordinary loyalty, because of the strain upon them, because of the ties of race, and in some cases the ties of blood, which unite them with those

who are now the enemies of the British Crown. I feel all that—I make all allowances for them. But I wish in return that right honourable gentlemen opposite—and the leader of the Opposition is a great offender in this respect—would not ignore the loyal British. If their opinion is taken, we are told they were the authors of the raid, and, I suppose, that they would have come home to reside in Park Lane. No, sir, those whom we have consulted, whose opinion we value, are those who are now giving of their property, giving of their children, giving their persons, in order to aid Her Majesty in this conflict. The strain and stress of war has been upon these men in Natal and Cape Colony, and they are bitterly injured and hurt by the neglect which is shown towards their views and by the sneers to which they are occasionally subjected. Now, sir, I say this is my proposition. The war is a just, a righteous, and a necessary war. I appeal to the party opposite, and I ask them, Do they say that this war is just, is necessary, is righteous? We know that they are divided. I venture on the opinion that those among them—I am speaking now entirely of what I may call the British members—who take the view that the war is unjust, unrighteous, are in a majority on that side of the House. It is a thing to which I think we should not shut our eyes, and which I regard as a matter of great gravity. Sir, it is only because the majority of the Liberal party hold that opinion that they put before the House such an amendment as this; when you deplore the want of judgment, the want of foresight, and the want of knowledge you imply; if you do not say it in so many words, that the war might have been prevented if those qualities had been possessed by Her Majesty's Government—in the same degree in which they are possessed by the Opposition. Yes, but a war that could be prevented is an unnecessary war, and I am not here to argue that an unnecessary war can ever be a just one. That being the case, I proceed to ask a question. Why have not these gentlemen who entertain these views the courage of their convictions? Why do not they vote against the war? They have no business to vote for this

amendment, any one of them. They should vote for the amendment of the honourable gentlemen from Ireland, which is to follow the present one ; they should vote for the immediate commencement of negotiations with a view to peace. That is the only consistent and logical course. Instead of which, what they are doing is to vote that this war is unjust, unrighteous, and unnecessary, and then to vote for its vigorous prosecution. Well, but what about the minority, those whom I fear are a minority on the other side, those who agree with us that the war is just and was inevitable ? I do not suppose that, any more than we, they thought always that the war was inevitable. I take it that, like us, having regard to what has happened, having regard to the proof, the evidence that we have been daily increasing as to the enormous preparations of the Boers, the evidence of a carefully prepared plan for the invasion of British colonies, the propaganda which we know has been going on among the Dutch subjects of Her Majesty, having regard to the conduct of the negotiations, having regard to the delivery of the ultimatum, and the invasion and annexation of British territory, having regard to the terms of the manifestoes that have been issued by the two Presidents—I take it that they feel, as we feel now, that the war could not have been avoided except by an absolute surrender on the part of Great Britain of all those things to which we attach importance. Then, believing as you do that the war was inevitable, how can you vote for an amendment which says that the war ought to have been avoided ? What an inconsistent position ; how unworthy of those honourable and right honourable gentlemen who appear to me to be in the position of accepting something to which they are utterly opposed, because they are allowed to vote for something else with which they happen to agree. A policy of that kind is said to unite the party ; well, it may unite the party, but it serves in the face of Europe to throw doubt upon the union of the kingdom. I do not suppose that the country is at all interested in the logical position of statesmen on the other side ; I believe, as I have already said, that the one thing which is in their

minds is their desire to be assured that the war shall be vigorously prosecuted, and that the results shall be commensurate with the sacrifices which have been made. We have suffered checks, we have made mistakes ; I am not anxious to dispute the blame. Let the Government bear the brunt of it until, at all events, the time is come, under happier auspices, when we can see how far that blame is to be apportioned between the system and those who have to administer it. In the meantime, blame us by all means. What is urgent is to retrieve those checks, and to repair those mistakes. As to what we are doing in that respect I must refer again to that admirable speech by my honourable friend the Under-Secretary for War, which, I am glad to hear from the right honourable gentleman opposite, excited as much admiration for its manner and ability on the other side of the House as it gave pleasure to his personal and political friends on this side.

How do we meet this charge of mistakes ? Not by denying the mistakes, not by saying what we have done, but what we are doing. You say we sent too few troops ; we are pouring troops into South Africa ; you have been told that in a few weeks you will have an army there of about 200,000 men. You said we were forgetful of the need for mounted men ; we have been increasing the number of horse infantry until in a very short time the number of mounted men in the British forces will be almost as great, if not quite as great, as the total of mounted men in the Boer army. You say our artillery was insufficient, and that it was not heavy enough ; we have sent battery after battery until now you have an unexampled force of that arm, and we have at the same time added a number of the heavier form of guns. When the war began no doubt the needs of the war were underestimated, and at that time—it is part of the same mistake—we failed to respond as we ought to have done to the splendid offers which came to us from our colonies. We accepted enough to show how much we valued their assistance, but we hesitated to put upon them any greater strain than we thought would assist us. What is happening

now? They are multiplying their offers, and every one is gratefully, promptly, appreciated and accepted. Sir, we shall have in this war before it is over an army of colonials called to the aid of Her Majesty who will outnumber the British army at Waterloo, and who will be nearly equal to the total British force in the Crimea. It is said, I hope not correctly, that in the first instance the services and special knowledge of these colonial troops were not properly appreciated by the authorities. I hope that was not true; but, at all events, Lord Roberts, with that kindly instinct which makes him so beloved by all who serve him, has selected from the colonial force a guard of honour which he takes as his personal bodyguard. Then we are told that a strategical mistake was made when a large portion of the army was diverted to Ladysmith. I will not argue a question which is outside my competence; but if that be a mistake, it is rapidly being corrected, and Lord Roberts will shortly have, if he has not already under his command, an army larger than that with which we intended to carry out the original plan of campaign, and upon which we base all our calculations, all our estimates, all our hopes, and which we still trust and believe will fulfil them. Meanwhile the spirit of the nation is absolutely unbroken. There is no sacrifice which they are not willing to make, there is no sacrifice which we will not ask of them if we think it necessary to succeed. We must go further than this, we admit it. Here is a war under new conditions, in a new country, with new arms, and with a people whose tenacity and courage are as admirable as those of our own soldiers. It has proved to require larger forces than anything that ever was estimated in any scheme that was ever framed by any previous Government in any previous war. That shows us, that convinces us, that the scheme which involves territorial defence as well as offensive action must be reconsidered in the light of recent events. A statement has been promised to the House on this subject, and with regard to it I will only say two things. I will say in the first place that one of the lessons of this war is the enormous defensive power

possessed by irregular or volunteer troops when fighting in defence of their own country. To that lesson we are widely awake, and it must not be lost sight of in any review of the situation; and I hope that steps will be taken to take advantage of that splendid material which is always at our disposal in this country, and which, with proper assistance, with liberal support and consideration, and perhaps with a great deal of money, may be made the most effective defensive force that the world has ever known. The second point is this—When we propound this scheme we shall do so, not as a party; but as humbly endeavouring to represent the wishes of the nation. We invite suggestions, we invite criticism, we invite assistance to make that scheme perfect; we shall welcome co-operation, and shall not be satisfied unless this whole House joins in what is so important in the interests of the nation. I think that I have been frank with the House. I have not spared the Government; I have admitted mistakes; but do not let us make perhaps a greater mistake than any, do not let us exaggerate. We have not told the whole case with regard to these matters. I think that those hostile critics who keep sharp eyes upon our performances might be led by what has been said in some quarters to justify their statement that this Empire is bleeding to death, that our prestige is all gone, and that we lie a helpless wreck at the mercy of our enemies. No, sir. The situation is really very different from that. What other nation in the world could have put 180,000 men into the field 7000 miles from these shores—a volunteer army—in so short a time? Where else could the transport have been found for such a large force, working with such precision, such speed, and such safety? When we talk of defects in the administration, defects on the part of those on the spot and defects on the part of the office here—I speak in the presence of military men—it appears to me that never before has so large a force been manœuvred and at the same time the commissariat and the medical service worked so smoothly. That is something, then, to put on the other side. Has any other nation a better right to be proud of her soldiers?

Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotsmen have vied with each other in heroic efforts and have performed what have been admitted to be almost impossible feats—impossible to any other infantry. May we not for one moment, forgetting all personal and political differences, stand on common ground in admiration of those who have added to the renown which already belonged to the historic regiments in which they serve? I speak of the troops from this country, but, of course, I speak with equal praise of the colonial soldiers who have been shoulder to shoulder in every conflict in which they have been engaged, and who have shown, besides, a special knowledge which has made them almost invaluable. All alike are worthy; and, I think that, whatever we may feel—humiliation if you please—at the defects which have been disclosed, that humiliation must be accompanied by the deepest pride.

I have dealt rather by way of summary than by way of argument with the measures by which we are trying to correct our deficiencies, and by which we hope before long to secure complete success. But when we have secured success, what then? It would be presumptuous, it would be premature, to talk now of the details of settlement. But the nation upon whom we are calling has a right to know, when a vote of censure like this is moved—which, if successful, would change the Government—what the Government think and what their would-be successors think upon the subject—what is, not the detail, as I have said, but the general principle upon which we have proceeded. We have had utterances from several right honourable gentlemen on the front bench opposite. They have been divided as to such a declaration as that which was made by the honourable baronet the member for Berwick.¹ I do not wish to quibble about words, but I should say it appears to me that we are, in substantial agreement with him. The utterances of other right honourable gentlemen—the leader of the Opposition in especial, I single him out only because of his representative character

¹ Sir Edward Grey.

—the honourable and learned member for Dumfries, the noble lord the member for Cricklade were cryptic, but, as far as I understood them, profoundly unsatisfactory. I say, speaking for the Government, that in so far as in us lies there shall be no second Majuba. Never again, with our consent, while we have the power, shall the Boers be able to erect in the heart of South Africa a citadel from whence proceed disaffection and race animosities. Never again shall they be able to endanger the paramountcy of Great Britain. Never again shall they be able to treat an Englishman as if he belonged to an inferior race.

I have said I do not come forward as an apologist for the Government. If the House thinks that our mistakes are unpardonable, we submit ourselves to their judgment. But, although I will not apologise for the Government, I should like to say one or two words on behalf of this nation. We were asked the other day to dispel the gloom which it was said had settled upon the nation. I do not accept the phrase. I know of no such feeling. I know, as I have said, of anxiety, of regret, and even of a certain perfectly natural irritation, but I know of no hesitation, no vacillation; I know of nothing which approaches to fear or to gloom. Reverses try the temper of a nation, and our people have borne the test; and every reverse has only been the signal for new offers of patriotic assistance from this country and new offers from our fellow-subjects across the seas. That, indeed, is a fact of the situation which I hope we can never forget. Never before in the history of our Empire has it so realised its strength and its unity. The splendid and, above all, the spontaneous rally of the colonies to the mother country affords no slight compensation even for the sufferings of war. What has brought them to your side? What has brought these younger nations to Great Britain, induced them to spring to arms even before you called upon them? It is that Imperial instinct which you deride and scorn. Our colonies, repelled in the past by indifference and apathy, have responded to the sympathy which has recently been shown

to them. A sense of common interest, of common duty, an assurance of mutual support and pride in the great edifice in which they are all members have combined to consolidate and establish the unity of the Empire ; and these peoples, shortly—very shortly as time is measured in history—about to become great and populous nations, now for the first time claim their share in the duties and responsibilities as well as in the privileges of Empire. Accordingly you have the opportunity, now that you are the trustees, not merely of a kingdom, but of a federation, which may not, indeed, be distinctly outlined, but which exists already in spirit at any rate. You are the trustees : they look to you as holding the headship of your race ; and we owe to them an infinite debt of gratitude for the moral as well as material support that they have given us. This is a question in which their interest is indirect. They see it with clearer vision than we do. Their eyes are not distorted by party politics. Sir, I will never believe that these free communities would have given their support and approval to any cause which was not just and righteous and which was not based on the principles on which their own institutions have been founded. Whatever may be the future, I say that we shall have to congratulate ourselves on the compensations as well as upon the evils of war. In Africa, these two races, so interesting, so admirable each of them in their own way, so different in some things, will now, at any rate, have learned to respect one another. I hear a great deal about the animosities which will remain after the war. I hope I am not too sanguine when I say I do not believe in them. When matters have settled down, when equal rights are assured to both the white races, I believe that both will enjoy the land together in settled peace and prosperity. Meanwhile, we are finding out the weak spots in our armour and trying to remedy them ; we are finding out the infinite potential resources of the Empire ; and we are advancing steadily, if slowly, to the realisation of that great federation of our race which will inevitably make for peace and liberty and justice.

BIRMINGHAM, JANUARY 11, 1902

[In reference to Count Bulow, the German Chancellor, who had characterised Mr. Chamberlain's quite amicable claim, that the methods of the British forces in the field in South Africa were not in fact so drastic as the Germans' in the war of 1870, as the insult of a 'distorted judgment.']

WHAT I have said, I have said. I withdraw nothing. I qualify nothing. I defend nothing. As I read history no British minister has ever served his country faithfully and at the same time enjoyed popularity abroad. I make allowance, therefore, for foreign criticism. I will not follow an example that has been set to me. I do not want to give lessons to a foreign minister, and I will not accept any at his hands. I am responsible only to my sovereign and to my countrymen.

UNITED EMPIRE

GROCCERS' HALL, LONDON, AUGUST 1, 1902

[In acknowledgment of the honorary freemanship of the Grocers' Company, conferred on Mr. Chamberlain and on Lord Kitchener.]

MASTER, MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—In the first instance, I desire to offer to you the most hearty thanks for the cordial welcome you have given to me and for the honour you have done me this evening. I am well aware that the distinction that you have conferred has been in your history only sparingly accorded. I receive it with gratitude and pride, and I shall always keep this permanent memorial of your generous appreciation with the greatest satisfaction and pleasure. The unstinted recognition of public service, however imperfect and incomplete it may be, is a great characteristic of British public life, and it is an encouragement to those who engage in public work, if, like myself, they are deeply sensible of how far their actual performance has lagged behind their good intention, nevertheless to

have won, in the course of their endeavour to do their duty, the goodwill and the affectionate regard of their countrymen. Such testimony as that which you have paid to-night is doubly valuable as coming from a great representative institution, representative of the intelligence, energy, and patriotism of the greatest city in the world. The interest of the occasion and the honour you have done me is greatly enhanced, in my opinion, by the fact that you have associated with me two great Englishmen—oh, I beg pardon, I should have said a great Englishman and a great Irishman—with whom it has been my privilege to co-operate during recent years, and to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude which it is not easy to express in words. In Lord Kitchener we have a soldier who makes us proud of the British army, who has showed the qualities which have in all times honoured the profession of arms, whose patience, tenacity, and infinite resource have enabled him on two critical occasions to render great service to his country, and now to accomplish a task which was one of the most difficult that could have been entrusted to any leader in the field. We rejoice in his success, we admire his victories, and not less do we admire that chivalrous spirit which has enabled him in the hour of his triumph to gain the hearts of those against whom he was so recently pitted in the field. In Lord Milner we have a great administrator whom no difficulty can daunt, no labour appal, and who is qualified in a special way to complete the work which Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener have so well begun. It will be Lord Milner's duty—there is no one more competent to fulfil it—to lay the foundations of a great free community in South Africa, to bury the animosities of the past, and to create those institutions under which a liberty-loving community may enjoy prosperity and the benefits which will be conferred by the British flag.

But if I am permitted to share in a recognition which you accord to my two distinguished colleagues, it is because in my own degree and measure I have been associated with them in the greatest task that can fall to a modern states-

man. I have co-operated with them in endeavouring to attain to that crowning aspiration which will give us for all time a united Empire. The defence of all British interests and the reorganisation of the newly acquired territories are inseparably linked with the greater scheme by which we hope to make our Empire something more than a mere geographical expression. We hope to make it a living entity in which each part shall contribute to the success and the security of the whole. The victories of peace as well as the victories of war have combined to draw us closer together. The discoveries of science, the improvement in communication, the growth in population and wealth of our great self-governing colonies, the quickened sense of all parts of the Empire of common interests, ay, and of common danger—these things have tended to bring about a new and fruitful conception of our Imperial destiny, in which the ideas of kinship and mutual obligation have been substituted for the mere pride of possession or of huckstering calculation about profit and loss. This mighty Empire of ours is compacted of many elements ; a hundred kingdoms, some of them with a civilisation as ancient as history itself, some of them only just emerging from barbarism—these have combined to make it great. And almost as many forms of government, from the latest democracy of the Anglo-Saxon race down to the carefully restricted despotism of an African chief, all these seek under our flag security for life and property, the blessings of even-handed justice. Multifarious we are in race, in language, and in religion ; we all join in loyalty to one Throne, we all believe in the common interests and common privileges of Empire, of which the Crown is at once the guarantee and the symbol. The first duty of the century upon which we have entered is to confirm these loyal sentiments and to substitute in every part of the Empire broad Imperial patriotism for the provincial spirit which tends to separation and disruption. In the performance of that duty, the war, much as we may regret it, has greatly assisted us ; in fact, even for our own losses and sacrifices, great as they have been, there is some

compensation to be found in the fact that the war has brought the Empire closer together.

During that great struggle Great Britain stood alone, isolated among the greater nations of the world. We did not ask their help, but we were not probably prepared for the passionate outburst of popular hostility which found expression in rejoicings at our reverses, in predictions about ultimate defeat, and in the grossest calumnies on the honour of our statesmen and the gallantry and humanity of our army. One might have supposed that the principles which we pursue with the effect that wherever we extend our rule we open all markets to the competition of the world—one might have thought that that would have spoken for us. We have not found it capable of mitigating in any degree the hostility, the jealousy, which our success has excited. I will not dwell on these manifestations. We have learnt our lesson. I refer to them for the sake of contrast. During the whole of this time we have been supported, and strengthened, and encouraged, and assisted by the men of our own blood and race. From the first day that the struggle began down to the other day when the terms of surrender were signed we have had the affectionate regard and approval, we have had the active assistance, we have had the moral support of our kinsmen in all our self-governing colonies and the sympathy of our fellow-subjects in all the possessions and dependencies of the British Crown. Why, there is no part of the Empire so distant as measured by leagues of sea or miles of land, there is no part so remote as regards the direct interests which they have had in this war, in which the emotions of the people have not vibrated like the beautiful instruments of Marconi's invention to a similar sentiment in the motherland, while they have remained absolutely insensible and inaccessible to the influences of an unfriendly or of an unsympathetic description. The lesson to all is our strength in unity. It has been, I think, somewhat of a revelation to the world, it has taught us that we no longer stand alone, it has laid upon us the duty of maintaining and strengthening the friendships

which we have learned to value. Our obligation to do this is as great in peace as in war. Any impulse of sacrifice and devotion which has cemented our union in blood and tears must not now be suffered to weaken. On the contrary, we have now to cultivate the sense of mutual obligation and mutual responsibility.

You are aware that during these last few weeks I have been holding with the able and distinguished representatives of our self-governing colonies one of those conferences whose educational influence is almost as important as their substantial results, and which enable us to enjoy free and frank communion on all matters of common interest. One thing has struck me more than anything else in connection with this conference, and that is that those who represent our dominions across the sea, whatever may be their individual differences or the differences of their respective countries in politics or circumstances, are all animated as we are, and in at least an equal degree, by a patriotic desire to strengthen the links which bind us together. That is an aspiration that is the goal to which we direct all our efforts. There are two main avenues, there are only, I believe, two avenues to reach this end. It can be reached through Imperial defence or through Imperial trade. Those are the subjects, the important subjects, of our discussion. I am not so foolish, I never have been, as to suppose that we could attain to an ideal all at once or with a single step. I am inclined to think that now we in this country are more advanced in these respects than even is public opinion in the colonies. It was not always so. There was a time when we were neglectful and unsympathetic, and when talk was heard in some quarters, at any rate, about letting the colonies go. All that has passed away. If the colonies desire our affection and regard, they have it in full measure, and I think we are prepared to do even more in the way of consolidating this Empire of ours than, perhaps, has occurred to them. But, if that be so, it would not be right, it would not be wise to force the pace, to ask our colonies to do more than their goodwill would suggest to them; and I recog-

nise, and always have recognised, that these two islands we call the United Kingdom, as theirs is the headship of the race, even so, in greater proportion than may be arithmetically their due, they must be willing to bear the burden and the responsibility of the proud position they hold. If it be the fact that the protection we afford by our fleet, the markets we open and obtain, that these do not bring us, immediately and at once, an altogether corresponding return, still, I am not in the slightest degree therefor discouraged. If we move slowly we are moving surely, and I for one have absolute confidence in the future. All our children are invited to this great partnership of Empire; and I believe that as they grow, and they are growing quickly to the full stature of nationhood, as they enter more completely into the glories and the privileges of our common heritage, we shall not find them blind or backward to the necessity of sharing in even greater degree the obligations which Empire entails. I believe that this conference which we are holding will lead to considerable results. If that be so, I think we may be content with the present, and we may look forward without misgiving to the future. No longer have we to read the annals of a kingdom—it is the history of an Empire with which we have to deal. Our work, the work of this generation, is to lay broad and deep the foundations upon which shall be built the edifice of our future greatness; and may we not say with our own Milton, ‘Methinks I see a noble and a puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks; methinks I see her like an eagle mewing her mighty youth and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam.’ That is a promise which is open to us, a promise which alone and separate we cannot achieve, but a promise of which nothing can deprive us if we are only true to ourselves and the high destiny which is placed within the reach of a noble ambition.

V. SPEECHES IN SOUTH AFRICA

TOWARDS the close of 1902 Mr. Chamberlain paid a visit to South Africa. His tour through the sub-continent was extended and exhaustive, and had in his own words a two-fold object: (a) 'With the express assent of His Majesty the King, and with the goodwill of all his colleagues, to express on behalf of the King and Government and people of the Motherland their sympathy with their kinsmen across the seas, and to cement the new relations so strikingly illustrated in the course of the recent war'; (b) to 'gain information upon the spot with regard to the manifold and complicated problems with which we are faced in South Africa.' These words were spoken on landing from H.M.S. *Good Hope* at Durban on Friday, December 26; and Mr. Chamberlain sailed by the R.M.S. *Norman* from Table Bay on his return to England on February 25, 1903. Within this brief period he had visited and addressed large and representative meetings—to say nothing of receiving deputations, attending dinners and public functions and sittings in council—at all the chief towns and centres of what is now the South African Union: at Durban, Pietermaritzburg, in Natal; in the Transvaal at Pretoria, where, *inter alia*, he received a delegation of the leading Boers headed by Generals Botha and Smuts, at Johannesburg, Potchefstroom, Lichtenburg, Ventersdorp, Zeerust; in the Orange Free State at Bloemfontein; and in the Cape Colony at Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Province, and at Kimberley, Beaufort West, Victoria West, the Paarl and Capetown. No part of South Africa, no section or race among its inhabitants, was unrepresented in the deputations which, with entire frankness on both sides, addressed, or were

addressed by, the Colonial Secretary. As the visit in itself constituted a precedent of the rarest significance and value, so it involved a strain of which Mr. Chamberlain's biographer must, one day, take account. But nothing could exceed the immediate reward of the Secretary of State's devotion. This outran the anticipations of the sanguine, and must be reckoned in the good influences which have made the Union of South Africa possible: like the work of reconstruction in the new colonies due to Lord Milner, and the influence of the young men whom he left behind him to preach union; and that most unlooked-for factor, the mutual sympathy and devoted co-operation in the fight against racial rule, of General Botha and Sir Starr Jameson. Wherever he went, Mr. Chamberlain's personality and his candour won friends for himself and enthusiasm for his mission. 'I have not been able,' he said at Bloemfontein on February 9, reviewing his experience in a parting word, after 'interviews by the hundred and deputations by the score'—'I have not been able to concede everything which has been put before me, yet I think the result of these interviews and meetings has been good and that we have parted better friends than we met.' This was in allusion to a conference with a delegation of Orange Free State burghers at which General Hertzog was understood, *more modoque suo*, and with that extreme racial bias since directed upon his own countryman General Botha, to have introduced a certain 'heat.' Mr. Hertzog had, in fact, brought certain accusations against the Government which were afterwards considered to be groundless, and a document was put into Mr. Chamberlain's hands on behalf of the deputation which some of the delegates had not seen, and which other delegates subsequently repudiated. The interview being described by a local newspaper as 'stormy,' Mr. Chamberlain assured his hearers that 'if their South African storms were no more serious they need have no fear for their crops or fruit.' 'Everywhere,' he concluded, 'I have had to acknowledge the absolute courtesy, the universal kindness of those whom I have come so far to see.'

... 'IN A SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION
... OF FIRMNESS ALSO'

DURBAN, DECEMBER 27, 1902

[On landing at Durban from H.M.S. *Good Hope*, Mr. Chamberlain was received with an address from the mayor and citizens in the Town Hall, and was, later, entertained at a public luncheon attended by several hundred leading citizens of Durban, and other representative people of Natal. His reply to the toast of his health and of Mrs. Chamberlain's was, after some words on landing, his first speech in South Africa.]

MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the enthusiasm and the evident sincerity with which you have drunk this toast. I thank you, Mr. Mayor, for the eloquent terms in which you have proposed it; and, indeed, I think I must not only thank you but I must thank the two previous speakers who contrived in the most irrelevant manner to speak my praise, when they should have been praising somebody else. After hearing those speeches, I thought I had three speeches to answer, and, accordingly, three speeches to make to you. There is one observation from my friend, Sir John Robinson, which I should like to notice, and that was when he spoke of the possibility—which I hope is something more than a possibility—that my visit may have some effect in strengthening the hands of that great public servant, Lord Milner, to whom South Africa already owes so much, and to whose ability, firmness, and honesty of purpose we still look to complete the work which he has undertaken, and whom we expect to be as great in conciliation as he has been in maintaining the rights of the Empire and the Colony. Mr. Mayor, I have especially to thank you, because, seeing in me as you have rightly done the personal embodiment of Downing Street, you have been good enough in your speech to rehabilitate very much that most deserving instrument. For, gentlemen, what is Downing Street? Downing Street is the greatest and the purest service that the world has ever

known. Downing Street makes mistakes, as who does not ? We are not all archangels even in Downing Street ; but I am certain that I say no more than justice demands when I say of the office over which I am so proud to preside that it would be impossible for any man to have found abler and more devoted assistants, and, if they have made mistakes, you may, I think, trust me when I say that it is not from indifference or apathy, but only from the necessary difficulty of realising a subject when you are six thousand miles from the place at which the circumstances arise.

Gentlemen, I hope this new trust in my great office will continue. And let me say that, while there is a great deal in being on the spot, and while there is much knowledge to be gained from local opinion, still it is sometimes possible, and you should recognise it, that we, who are at the centre, are able to take a broader and a wider view. We have a large horizon, we deal with Imperial and not merely local politics and possibilities, and sometimes, though our policy may be hard to follow, believe me it may be right even though it involves certain sacrifices of your opinions. One more word in reference to the speeches to which I have just listened. You have most rightly and most kindly associated my wife with myself, and I will say that no one knows better than she does how much in arduous times, in anxious moments, when the pressure of the work began to be beyond the ordinary strain, and when sometimes one felt discouraged at the misunderstandings which arose—how much at these times I have felt encouragement in the thought that my fellow-subjects, my countrymen in the four quarters of the globe, believed that I was honestly seeking to serve the interests of the Empire at large ; and when the smoke of the great war in which we have been engaged has cleared away, may we not hope that both sides will be content to forget all that we ought not to remember, and seek to work cordially for the common good. Ladies and gentlemen, two proud and kindred races have come to stay in South Africa. They are kindred races, kindred in origin, alike in the great qualities which both nations have through-

out their glorious history constantly displayed—in the love of freedom, in endurance, in tenacity and resolution, in independence and self-reliance ;—these are the qualities which we find in the nation which honours a Van Tromp, a De Ruyter among its leaders, which claims William the Silent among its statesmen. They are the qualities which we also wish to associate with the names of Drake, of Frobisher, of Nelson and Marlborough and Wellington, of Pitt and Chatham. Out of these very qualities have sprung some of our greatest difficulties. Between such people there must be a struggle, a rivalry. As long as human nature is what it is, it was inevitable that in the clash of interests there should be this struggle for supremacy, and it had to be fought out. We are neither of us nations to surrender without a fight, and in my opinion, this terrible war, which we all deplore, was in the nature of things inevitable, and no statesmanship could have permanently prevented it. Neither would yield but to a trial of strength. Now the issue has been decided once for all, the trial has come, and the British flag is, will be, and must be paramount in South Africa.

Now, Mr. Mayor, I find myself with the greatest pleasure in the colony of Natal. It is not the first time I have visited a British colony or dependency under the British flag, and what always strikes me on these occasions is that wherever I go, and wherever I find a community enjoying its liberties under that time-honoured standard, I find always the same characteristics, the same qualities under the British flag throughout the world. You are comparatively a new colony, you are the last to enter the circle of self-governing bodies, and I think you will do credit to the liberties which you use and which you enjoy. Looking back, I find that you can only count about two generations of human life. Yes, but history is not always measured by time ; and what a history yours has been ! How interesting, how eventful ! What a school the history of Natal has been for those great qualities of resolution and capacity to govern. I feel inclined to speak of its pioneers, both Dutch and English, who gave us Natal, in the words of Kipling's 'Song of the English' :

'On the sand-drift—on the veld-side—in the fern scrub we lay,
That our sons might follow after by the bones on the way,
Follow after—follow after! We have watered the root,
And the end has come to blossom that ripens for fruit!'

In this experience, at one time, Dutch and English have been fighting shoulder to shoulder for the cause of civilisation against barbarism, and at another time, Dutch and English have been fighting one against the other in a courageous rivalry. May we not hope that out of these experiences, different as they are, may yet grow—maybe they have grown—the mutual respect and admiration which is the only sound foundation upon which you can build up a lasting friendship. But then, gentlemen, if that is granted,—and there is no reason why it should not be granted by our opponents, as well as by ourselves; it has been forcibly said by the bravest men who led them with such courage and ability through all the vicissitudes of this great struggle—if that be granted, what is there any longer to separate us? Why should not reconciliation be easy? Victor and vanquished alike have bravely played their parts. We are above the meanness of jeering over our triumph. They need feel no humiliation in their defeat, and therefore, when the wounds which have been made are healed over, when the scars which have been left begin to fade, then let us see to it as Englishmen worthy of the name that we do nothing to recall the regretted animosities of the past. We must show our readiness to welcome our new fellow-subjects to all the privileges of a greater and a freer Empire than the world has ever known. We must give to them equality in all things with ourselves, and we must ask of them something in return. It is with them now that the future lies. We hold out our hand to them; we ask them to take it, and to take it without any *arrière pensée*, but frankly and in the spirit in which it is offered. Let us try whether out of these two great and kindred races we cannot make a fusion—a nation stronger in its unity than either of its parts would be alone. That is the future of South Africa to which all patriots must aspire, and which is

within the bounds of a reasonable aspiration. We have no cause to despair; what we wish to do here we have done in the past. The differences which separate us from our Dutch fellow-subjects are not so great as the differences which separated Scotland from England before the Union; they are not so great as the differences which separated the French and the English in Canada, when Wolfe and Montcalm fought on the plains of Abraham. There also the same problems arose, the same problems had to be decided; two great nations were fighting for supremacy. That question once decided, they agreed to become one nation, with the greatest possible advantage and benefit to both. That, then, is our object. Coming closer home, we see that the Dutch themselves have united with other races. In the early history of Cape Colony, the French Huguenots, speaking a different language, and forming a fourth of the population, became amalgamated with the Dutch, so that you can draw no racial line of distinction between the French on the one side and the Dutch on the other, as we now desire that the Dutch and the English shall become one. I see cause for hope in the news that reaches me this morning—at which I am not surprised, for I had heard something of it before I left home—that a contingent of Boers, recently fighting against us, have offered their services, which have been accepted, as our allies, in the struggle against the Mullah in Somaliland. I say it does not surprise me, because one of the last persons I saw before leaving London was General Ben Viljoen, who, as you know, was one of the most brilliant commanders on the Boer side, and, I judge, was one of those who was most respected by his British opponents. General Viljoen told me that, although he had business of his own, yet nothing would give him greater pleasure than to place his services at the disposal of His Majesty in order to fight for him in Somaliland or elsewhere, wherever opportunity offered. Well, then, I say, ladies and gentlemen, that I think we do well to be hopeful. I do not expect all the memories of the past three years to be effaced from the minds of either Briton or Boer

in the twinkling of an eye ; but with some goodwill on both sides and some light given by the leaders—and amongst the leaders I would, above all, include those leaders of religious thought and sentiment, who can do so much to move the minds of their countrymen—with these aids, I say, we may hope for a reconciliation which will bring a greater prosperity to South Africa than she has ever known. I come then in a spirit of reconciliation. In a spirit of firmness also. The losses we have suffered, the sacrifices we have made, these must not be thrown away. But I come in a spirit of reconciliation, and I believe that in that spirit you will cordially concur. I am equally sure that you, upon whom so much of the brant of this war has fallen, will entertain no vindictive feeling in the future against our late opponents. I remember a short time before peace was made, that we, the Government at home, submitted to the Governments of Natal, and of Cape Colony, the general lines upon which we believed that peace might be properly secured, and I remember that the Government of Natal, in reply, while approving those lines, begged us never to lose sight of what they said was constantly in the view and the wishes of all South Africans, namely, the federation of the different States in this Country. Yes, gentlemen, federation is now a thing to which we look forward with the most favourable anticipations, but a federation presupposes that it will be safe for us to concede to the new colonies the self-government which you enjoy. When that time will come depends upon the spirit in which our advances are met. I hope it will come soon. On the other hand, no mistake would be greater than to hasten it prematurely. When it comes, I firmly believe it will set the seal upon the perpetual unity of the two great races that have been in such close and severe conflict, and that it will herald the birth of a new nation under the British flag.

IN APPEAL TO DUTCH AND ENGLISH

MARITZBURG, DECEMBER 30, 1902

[At a public dinner in the Town Hall, Maritzburg, in reply to the toast of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, proposed by the Mayor.]

YOUR EXCELLENCY, MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,
—I thank your Mayor for the graceful terms in which he has been good enough to propose my health. I thank you for the reception you have given the toast. Your kindness, the kindness of Natal, is overwhelming and embarrassing. When on my return I come across any statesman in want of employment I shall send him here. When he returns to the mother country I am sure he will be a strenuous advocate of an eight-hours day. For myself, I regret that I have been unable to accept one-tenth of the hospitable and friendly invitations that have been addressed to me, and I regret especially that I was unable to be present at the Mayor and Mayoress's reception this afternoon; but I have been constantly engaged from the moment I got up until about half-an-hour before this dinner. The Mayoress has been good enough to accept my excuses; you, I hope, will do the same. I do not think that my work has been thrown away. I have not, it is true, been long in South Africa, but already the questions which are agitating your minds, and on which your future depends, are beginning to shape themselves before my eyes. And I am bound to add that the difficulties of these questions do not grow less as I approach them more closely. I have already warned you and my friends generally that some of you are indulging in unreasonable expectations when you imagine that the visit of a Secretary of State, rare as it is, is going off-hand to settle the problems with which you have to deal. Ladies and gentlemen, my own expectations have been more modest, and I am sanguine that those at least will be realised. I am confirmed in my hope by the cordial spirit in which I have been received. I hope, by personal intercourse with your statesmen, and with representative men of every class and

every race, to acquaint myself with local opinions in a way which I could not hope to do by any knowledge of books or of dispatches. I hope, at least, to get some idea of the main lines upon which settlement must take place, and I bear constantly in mind, as you must do, that in these great problems time is an essential factor. I hope, as I have said, to increase my knowledge of local affairs. Especially am I looking forward to that intimate intercourse with Lord Milner which I shall enjoy during the course of the next few days—to sharing all the advantages of his experience during the last five years, to exchanging views with him, that so I may be enabled, when I return home, the better to co-operate with those who here are carrying on the administration of the country with so much ability and discretion. I do not expect to settle everything after a few months in this country, but I do expect to be able to put before the people of South Africa, and before the people at home, the nature of the questions which have to be settled. Now, what is the greatest of them? I can state that in a word. It is how to secure unity, and when I say unity I mean unity in three great divisions—unity between the two white races which have established themselves in South Africa, unity within each of the separate colonies for the objects which they have in common, and, lastly, unity of all the colonies of South Africa in one great federation. I hope you will bear with me if I say a few words on each of those divisions. Unity of race. We have the assurance of all the principal leaders of those who were recently our foes, fighting against us in the field, that they will in future consider themselves loyal subjects of King Edward VII. It is not for us to comment upon, or to criticise, that declaration; it is for us to accept it fully and wholly, and to welcome it as it deserves. But we must carry it further. A declaration of loyalty may mean much or little. I have been told since I have been in this country, as I was told at home by some of those gentlemen themselves, that I ought not to expect them immediately to forget the past, or to do more than give a passive loyalty. I understand. I make allowance

for their feelings ; but I hope the time is not distant—and it is part of my business here to give reasons for the hope—that the passive will be converted into an active loyalty, for until that is done the progress of South Africa will be hindered, and the prosperity of South Africa will be delayed. Now, the other day I referred to the relations between Scotland and England as an example which our Boer fellow-subjects might well take to heart. I should like, in a few words, to enlarge upon that illustration. Scotland and England were two separate nationalities—at least as distinct as Boer and Briton. Our differences were as acute ; our fights were as well fought out ; and now that we have been united for so long, both races still preserve their distinctive national characteristics. We go further. We have our differences in religious observances ; we have a different system of law ; we have our cherished traditions of our separate historical pasts. We have all those things, but yet we are one nation. And that is what I would especially emphasise—that all that is glorious in the history of either nation, the heroes of both, the victories of both, are the joint inheritance of the united people. We have common aspirations for the future. We are no longer rivals. We have forgotten all the animosities of the past. We are partners in one great Empire, to which we have each contributed all that is good in our national characteristics, in which we have each invested the whole of our separate capital. I ask the Boers to reflect upon such an example as this, to aid us in bringing about a similar result in this country. We want the same relations between Dutch and English—between Boer and Briton—as have existed so long between Englishmen and Scotsmen, and I say, be his nationality what it may, that he who hinders this desired consummation is a traitor to his country, and is an enemy to the prosperity of South Africa. Then the second division to which I have referred is unity of policy and actions within each separate colony. Upon what you do now depends the future of the whole country. We are making history, and, on such an occasion, when decisions have to be taken upon

which the welfare of future generations will depend, it behoves every one to treat party and personal interest as, for the time, altogether secondary, and to rise to the height of what I will call, even in these colonial possessions, a national patriotism, which is superior to all those petty and local interests. Take the case of Natal. You, every man of you, —with all your hopes of the future upon which you are basing your enterprise, the signs I see around me wherever I go—each depends upon having your interests fairly and properly cared for in the general settlement. If I could conceive such a thing, and you were left out in the cold in such a settlement, I am afraid your investments would return very small dividends. Therefore you are intimately concerned in what is being done. No one can help you. It is no use appealing to the Secretary of State. You are no longer in leading-strings. It is not the duty of the Imperial Government to look after you. You have risen to the status of independent manhood ; and, accordingly, I say to you, what is almost a platitude, that, while it is impossible and undesirable in any community such as this that anything should be done to discourage individual thought and the free expression of diverse views, it is necessary that you should be united for common objects. And if, unfortunately, you should speak in the next few months, and the next few years, with a divided voice on such matters as customs and railways, and native administration—all of them vital matters for your future prosperity—if you should speak, I say, with a divided voice, your hands will be weakened in the councils of South Africa, and your descendants will suffer in the future.

Now I come to the question of the union of South Africa in one great confederation. I am certain that every one of you must be aware that sooner or later you will, of necessity, follow the example of Australia and Canada. The question is : When will this consummation be reached ? It must not be imposed on you by the Imperial Government. It is not our business to force this federation upon our fellow-subjects. Here is a question that rests entirely

with you. This only can I say, that while we should do nothing to interfere with your aspirations in this direction, we should rejoice when a united people, with one consent, demands a new constitution that will give added strength and prosperity to the Empire. In order to secure this end, you will have to make sacrifices, and in any conference which is hereafter designed to secure this result, the colonies represented must go into it with the support of their constituents, ready each one to contribute a part, to give as well as to take; and you will only attain this great advantage by some self-sacrifice on the part of the separate parties to the settlement. Federation is brought about by various means. In Canada the scheme of federation was suggested by the mother country. In the case of Canada it has undoubtedly been accompanied in its results by the most splendid developments of the greatest colony of the Empire. In Australia, federation came after a good many years of deliberation, and after long discussion by all the greatest statesmen of the country. This was a product of home growth, and I have no doubt it will justify itself. In both cases you have examples to follow, but in South Africa you have an inducement which did not exist elsewhere. In Canada and Australia there was practically a homogeneous white population. Here you are a comparatively small white population in the presence of a manifold number of the native races; with the relief from inter-tribal disputes, from slavery, from all the causes which have affected the native populations of Africa, you may be certain that these will multiply with extraordinary rapidity;—you must be strong and united to deal with the problem which their numbers will create. But you will be confronted with other problems of even greater difficulty. The idea of federation should commend itself to every colonist, but I am not blind to the danger which may accompany any too hasty act. We must not be led away by high-sounding platitudes and generalities. We must not decide till we have—in our own minds, at any rate—satisfied ourselves as to the way in which the details are

likely to be accomplished. Nothing is more dangerous than to accept a principle without knowing how it is to be applied. I want to put before you one or two of the points which you will have to consider. We are all for federation in the abstract, but when we come to the particulars you have to consider what must accompany federation, what must precede it. In the first place, we must concede responsible government, as you enjoy it here, to the new colony of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony. Well, it is perfectly clear that that concession cannot in any circumstances be made immediately. The population has not returned to the country, its industry has not recovered from the effects of the war, and it would be ridiculous to assume that any kind of representative body which could be collected at the present moment would be as fairly representative of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony as they will be when normal conditions are restored. Again, assuredly we have a right, before this is considered, to ask from our Boer friends some evidence of that active loyalty which we hope soon will follow the passive loyalty which we welcome to-day. It would be a dereliction of Imperial duty if we were to put it into the power of any individuals, or any party, to undo by political agitation the work which has been accomplished so painfully by force of arms. Then to touch upon another question. Take the case of the two new colonies—the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony. Can they stand alone? Are they ripe for self-government? One of the accompaniments of self-government, in any case which has been yet conceived, has been the declaration by the home Government that when self-government has been finally established, the colony must provide for its own defence, and the Imperial garrison must be withdrawn. Can the Imperial garrison be now withdrawn from the two new colonies? But that is not all. There is another question. At the present moment there is no doubt whatever that the Transvaal offers a field for what I may call national investment. There are gold mines yet undiscovered. There are mines, in my opinion, of greater im-

portance : mines of iron, mines of coal ; there is a possible development, a certain development of agricultural industry. There is an opportunity for schemes of irrigation. All these things require enormous capital ; capital which, under existing circumstances, private individuals are not likely to supply, and which might be wisely and beneficially supplied by the help of our assistance. For the purpose of this development an enormous loan will be required. I say again, can the new colonies stand alone ? Can they go upon the market without the guarantee of the Imperial Government ? I do not know of any precedent whatsoever in which the Imperial Government has been asked or has consented to guarantee a loan of a self-governing colony ; and therefore it is well that those who distrust what they are pleased to call the Government of Downing Street, those who have complained, sometimes with justice, of the mistakes which may be made by the administration at home—it is well for them to consider whether the time has yet come when they can accept their freedom, a freedom which will indeed give to them their independence, but which also will give freedom to the Imperial Government. There is an old proverb that those who pay the piper may call the tune, and if the new colonies are ready to pay the piper, then no doubt they will claim to call the tune. I have made these remarks for the purposes of arousing interest in the subject, of calling forth criticism and suggestion, to receive which I have come to this country. There are obstacles in the way of an immediate federation of South Africa. I do not say that they are fatal obstacles. I do not say that they cannot be overcome, but they are matters that ought to be carefully considered, and no one has the right to demand the application of this or that general principle until he has considered all the possible results, and is able to deal with the difficulties which may arise in connection with them. My view is this. Let every South African keep always before him, let him make it a matter of constant reflection, how these aspirations after union can best be achieved. I appeal to Dutch and to

English, I appeal to the capitalist and to the workman, I appeal to all classes, to all sections of politics, and I say, do everything in your power to bring about the union of the people without any of the miserable and harmful distinctions which have kept them apart ; do everything to bring about this union, which is a necessary precedent to the consummation which I believe is to be desired, not only in the interests of South Africa, but in the interests of the Empire as a whole. This is my message to South Africa ; forget all the animosities of the past, look forward to the promise of the future.

Now there is one other union to which I have not yet referred, which also I wish you Britons to keep in your hearts. We want to unite the Empire. The war has done something to cement that union. It is, however, still only a union of sentiment. What a slender tie it is that binds this great nation together. How easily, by any false move on our part, or on yours, it might have been broken. How easily, if we were not wise, if we were not animated by the sentiment which is deep in the hearts of every Briton, how easily these ties might be loosened. A slender tie, and yet how strong. A tie not defined in any written document, since there are no obligations between us and no indentures have passed, yet a tie which has produced vast results, which has extorted the admiration of the world. Ladies and gentlemen, if a few years ago any man had dared to predict that in a war in which they had no personal or direct interest, the great colonies of the Empire would sacrifice life and treasure, he would have been regarded as little short of a lunatic, and yet what has happened ? Do we not all feel prouder for what we know ? When the appeal was made to the mother country to protect her subjects, to secure the redress of their grievances, to maintain the obligations which had been contracted—when the mother country responded as she always will to that appeal—when her resources were strained to the uttermost—when our foreign rivals gloated over our difficulties, and rejoiced at the hour of our approaching downfall—when we stood isolated amongst the nations of the world—that was the time

when the sons of Britain sprung to our assistance ; then we found, then the world found, we could count upon the valour of our daughter nations—

‘The valour of daughter nations, happy to press where the mother strives.

Eager to help her, eager to shield her, loyally lending love and lives.’

Ladies and gentlemen, let us cherish these sentiments and the unity of the Empire. It makes us all the stronger. Now one, now another, may be glad that we have all agreed to bear one another’s burden. Let us all agree to maintain unimpaired, to hand down to our descendants our glorious dominion based on the love and loyalty of all its members. Yes, it is a glorious thing to be a member of a great empire. It is something to be citizens of a prosperous colony ; it is more to be the inhabitant of a great kingdom ; but it is still more to rise above all these, above all parochialism, all provincialism. It is greatest to be a member of the freest and the most powerful of all the empires which the world has ever seen.

TO THE BOER DELEGATES

RAADZAAL, PRETORIA, JANUARY 8, 1903

[On this day, in the historic Parliament House of the South African Republic, Mr. Chamberlain was presented with an address signed by over a hundred Boer delegates from all parts of the Transvaal. The address was written in Dutch, but an English translation was read aloud, and General Smuts then addressed Mr. Chamberlain, welcoming him on behalf of the delegation, assuring the new Government of the loyalty of the people of the Transvaal, at the same time candidly expressing the Boer mind on certain topics. The following speech was Mr. Chamberlain’s reply. It was well and cordially received, and applauded, particularly towards the close, by General Botha. Mr. Schalk Burger and General Botha, who followed, exculpated themselves at some detail in reference to the money sent to Europe. At a meeting of delegates held after Mr. Chamberlain’s departure, Mr. Schalk Burger, presiding, expressed the opinion that the Colonial Secretary’s reception of them had been ‘fair and businesslike.’]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, as he rose to reply, was received with prolonged applause. He said : Gentlemen, I regret very

much that I cannot address you in your own language. But I am informed that what I have to say to you will be translated into Dutch, and a copy will be given to every representative present here to-day. In the first place, it is my duty and my pleasure to thank you for the cordial and sincere welcome which you have given me to South Africa. I recognise the representative character of this meeting. I think I may take the sentiments to which I have just listened as expressing the feelings of the whole Boer people. I have already had an opportunity of meeting in private many of your countrymen, and of making their better acquaintance. I hope that our intercourse has done something to remove misunderstanding, and that you are beginning to see that, however bad I may be, I am not quite so black as I have been painted. In these interviews, as to-day, you have spoken very plainly to me. That is what I like, and I intend to reciprocate by speaking just as plainly to you. I believe all our past troubles and difficulties have arisen, not so much from real differences of opinion, but because we have failed to understand each other. Now, while I recognise and thank you for the courteous and moderate tone of your address, I must say that I should have had still greater pleasure in receiving it, if it had contained, besides demands and appeals for the future, some little recognition of what we have already done.

In the newspapers this morning I read a report of some remarks by General Botha, in the course of which, in eloquent terms, he expressed his gratitude to those friends on the Continent who had assisted with money the cause of the Boers, and he stated that in their mission tour they had been able to collect a sum of £100,000 for the widows and orphans. I do not for a moment wonder that he should express his thanks for these contributions, but he does not appear to have told you, probably he did not know himself, that the British Government, which represents, of course, in this struggle the party against whom you fought, when they have paid all the claims for repatriation and for compensation for war losses, will have spent on behalf of the country

a sum of between ten and fifteen millions sterling. I say that never in the history of the world has a conquering nation done so much for those who were so recently their opponents, and I think that when you give thanks for a hundred thousand pounds, you may also in your heart at any rate recognise that we who have given a hundred and fifty times as much are not altogether undeserving of your regard.

On what terms are we to live in future? I think that those of you who read the newspapers, and follow the course of public opinion, will have seen that there is an impression that while the Boer leaders are most excellent people at a bargain, they fail to recognise our desire that when a bargain is once made it should be stuck to. The terms of peace at Vereeniging were the subject of long discussion. They were submitted to all the burghers in the field in their separate commandoes. I do not pretend that they gave to the Boers everything that the Boers desired to have, but such as they were, they were the best we could offer, and they were frankly and loyally accepted, and it is a little too early now to go further than the terms which were then conceded.

The terms at Vereeniging are the charter of the Boer people. You have every right to call upon us to fulfil them in the spirit and in the letter; and if, in any respect, you think we have failed, or that in the future we do fail, in carrying out these terms, bring your complaints to us and they shall be redressed.

Now, in the light of what I have said, I propose to examine the different points which have been brought to my notice by the memorial and by the speech to which we have just listened.

In the first place, as regards an amnesty to rebels, you will not find in the terms at Vereeniging any allusion whatever to this question. No demand in regard to the rebels was either made or conceded. It is therefore a matter outside and beyond what I have called your charter, but, although nothing was said in the terms of surrender, the British representatives, in order that there might never be any

future misunderstanding on the subject, put in a paper which they gave to the leaders before the terms were signed, in which was stated exactly what would be done. That paper said that the rebels would be subject to the laws and decisions of the Governments of the colonies against which their crime had been committed, and there, I think, the matter might have been allowed to rest. But we ourselves, without any pressure upon us by you or anybody else, have already done a great deal to meet what we knew to be your wishes. The Government of Natal of their own accord have released the greater number of the rebels who were imprisoned in the colony. In other parts of the country, in accordance with the report of the commission which the British Government appointed, and which included two of our greatest lawyers, hundreds have been released. The sentences of others have been very largely reduced. This, I think, should show to you that we were not animated by any vindictive spirit, and that we have already exercised without pressure a large measure of generosity. Only the worst cases remain. In some of these cases the charges include something more than rebellion; in others the persons who are in prison having been pardoned for a first act of rebellion have afterwards broken faith and taken up arms a second time. Now, you gentlemen who have been, as Mr. Smuts has said, inhabitants of a free country, and who, I hope, will soon be inhabitants of a country just as free, you, I say, who value a free constitution and free liberties, must feel with me that there is no more serious political offence—I am not speaking of moral offences—than rebellion against a free Government; and now you come to me and you ask me to act as if I thought this offence which cuts at the root of all government were a venial one. I ask you to bear in mind what was your own action. How did you treat your rebels? You shot them, you imprisoned them, you jam-boked them, you fined them. I do not say that you were wrong; you were, as you thought then, protecting your own Government. I ask you as reasonable men to justify us when we try to protect our Government. That is not all.

How now are those of your countrymen who at one period of war either surrendered or in some cases assisted the British, how are they being treated? Surely you must first say that you are ready to forgive and forget all the injuries of the past before you can ask us to adopt the exceptional policy which you have put before us. Now, I do not wish you to understand that I close the door absolutely to further amnesty, but it will not come as a result of pressure. We shall see how the situation develops. If, as we hope and believe, you will show that loyalty which Mr. Smuts has said is a national characteristic, I shall be glad if the colonial Governments find it in their power further to reconsider these sentences. "

Then in the next place you ask in this memorial that we should at once allow without exception every burgher, be his situation and past conduct what it may, to return to this country. I understand that you refer to those burghers who did not, I think, fight themselves, but who served their country abroad. There is also another class, that is, of prisoners of war, who have up to the present time refused to make the declaration which is the basis of the terms of peace. Again I say to you, these people, whatever may be the merits of the cases, are altogether outside the terms of peace. No terms were made for them at Vereeniging. Their names and the classes to which they belong do not appear in the document which I have called your charter. Now, I do not think that we can allow any man to come back who refuses the terms which his own leaders agreed to in his name, and, as regards the others, those who are in Europe, each case must be considered on its merits. If we find, or if we think, that in the interests of the peace of the country it is desirable that certain individuals should continue to be excluded from the Transvaal, it is our duty to exclude them, whatever the hardship may be to them. Our great interest is the peace of the country, and if we have reason to believe any person now outside the country would come back here and make trouble or stir up animosities which we desire to get rid of, we will keep him out. These gentlemen—some of them,

many of them, perhaps all of them—declare that they are ready to prove their loyalty. We have asked them to give evidence of their loyalty.

You know, we know, that immediately before the war and during the war, large sums of money belonging to the Government of the Transvaal were sent to Europe to be used on behalf of the Boer cause. So far as that money was properly expended in promoting your cause, we have nothing whatever to say to it, but we think that as the Government representing you, we have the right to ask to see the accounts, to know that the money was properly spent for the objects for which it was sent, and to know also what has become of the balance. We are told that the balance is a small one. We know that immense sums were obtained from the banks, we know that a large portion of these sums was sent to Europe, and we believe that there must be a very large sum still unspent. If we are wrong, nothing is easier than to prove to us and to you that the money so sent has been expended. The war is over, there is no need for keeping secret any longer any expenditure of the kind. Nobody will be held responsible. Nobody will be punished for expenditure legitimately made in accordance with his instructions from the late Government. We do not want this money for ourselves. We have promised that when we receive it we will hand it over to a committee, on which the Boer leaders shall themselves be placed, and that the whole of the money shall be spent in relieving the widows, orphans, and destitute. We asked these gentlemen who were in Europe, whose duty it was to know where the money had gone, and what had become of it, to get us the necessary information. Up to the present time we have not succeeded, but we think that a full account of this money, and the handing over to such a committee as I have described of the balance, would be a better proof of loyalty than mere assurances.

I come now to the question of the annexation to Natal of a portion of what was the Transvaal. Again, I remind you that this matter had been settled before the terms of

peace were signed, and accordingly had no part in that agreement. A proclamation has already been issued, the new Government is getting to work, and it is an act which it is impossible to undo, but when I was in Natal I had an opportunity of seeing a number of farmers who had come from that district. I do not mean to say that if they had had their choice, they would have preferred the change which has been made, but I think they were satisfied with what the Government is about to do for them, and they appear to be settling down and ready to make the best of the situation ; and I would like to point out to you that, so far as their political condition is concerned, they will enter immediately into the full rights of citizenship which is given to every other citizen in Natal. They will therefore be free citizens in a free state, and they will be the earliest of the Boers to occupy that position.

Gentlemen, I pass on to other points raised in the memorial and which may freely be considered as arising out of the terms of peace. I quite understand the anxiety that is felt by all of you in regard to the language question. It is not, as I understand, entirely a question of self-interest, but is a question still more of sentiment and of religion. In the terms of peace, it was promised that Dutch education should be given to the children of all parents who desired it. That promise we will keep. In the enormous amount of work which has to be done after a great war the administration of a great department like the Education Department may still be imperfect, and there may be ground for some of the complaints which I have heard. I hope, however, to assure you of our determination to correct any faults which may now exist and to keep absolute faith with you in this respect. It has been represented to me that some of the teachers who are appointed to teach Dutch are not able to teach it properly. If that be the case, we will certainly take steps to remove a grievance which I should at once admit to be well founded. There is also a fear expressed in some quarters lest the teachers in any school or at any time should interfere with the religion of the children. That is

entirely contrary to our instructions and our intentions, and if any case of the kind is brought to the knowledge of the Government it will be immediately corrected.

The memorial goes on to speak of the native question, of the importance of which I am fully aware. It is no doubt natural that after the war, in which unfortunately the coloured population have seen the white races fighting against each other, there should be some unrest among them, but you may rest assured that that will be strenuously discouraged by your Government. I observe that Mr. Smuts said, that you are all in favour of justice and fair treatment of the natives. More than that cannot possibly be asked. For the natives, who come under our rules, who enjoy our protection, must obey our laws, and when, as in very many cases, they have accepted obligations or made contracts either to pay money or to give labour, those contracts must be fulfilled and the power of the Government will be used in order to secure this result. I hope that you will recognise that the new force, which is called the South African Constabulary, is not a garrison to hold the country down, but is a police force for your protection, and that whenever you have complaints to make of breach of contract on the part of natives, or misconduct by them, you will not hesitate to apply to the South African Constabulary, and to look upon them as friends who are there to help you in your troubles.

The last paragraph of the memorial gives me great pleasure, because it invites me to see for myself something of the life in the country districts, and assures me of a hearty welcome. I propose to accept that invitation, and, as far as my time will permit, to visit some of the agricultural districts, to make the acquaintance of the farmers, who are there, and to learn from them on the spot whether any further assistance can be given to them or whether there is anything more the Government can do for them. In making these visits I shall endeavour to select districts which are removed from the railway, and therefore will represent a different sort of interest to that which I have to consider when I am

in the towns. Now, gentlemen, in conclusion let me say how heartily I agree with Mr. Smuts, when he said that we must all stand together in the work of restoration. The hope for South Africa lies in closer intercourse between the two races. We are not really separated, either in interests or in character. If we go back to our ancestry, we find that in the centuries long ago we were kinsfolk, and now, although we have been separated for so long, the resemblances between us are greater than our differences. What are the qualities which we admire in you? Your patriotism, your courage, your tenacity, your willingness to make sacrifices for what you believe to be right and true. Well, those are the qualities which we desire to imitate and which we believe we share.¹ I believe then that with consideration on both sides, with strict observance of agreements on both sides, with a readiness to give as well as to take, before many years are over, probably sooner than any of us now can anticipate, we shall all be one free people under one flag.

‘AS ONE GREAT NATION’

WANDERERS’ HALL, JOHANNESBURG, JANUARY 17, 1903

[The occasion on which the following speech was delivered—a public dinner given to Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlain by the citizens of Johannesburg—was esteemed at the time to be the largest and most representative gathering of the kind ever held in South Africa, and attended *inter alios* by the High Commissioner, the lieutenant-governors of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, and the administrator of Southern Rhodesia, the judges of the Transvaal, the leading clergy, the heads of the mining industry, and General Louis Botha. The chairman of the Town Council, Mr. St. John Carr, proposed the health of Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlain, ‘come under lifting clouds to continue the work which the Colonial Secretary was forced to undertake—to sow good seed in the ploughed land, relying upon all who labour in the South African field not to look back, but by goodwill . . . to fructify this work that has cost so many tears.’]

YOUR EXCELLENCIES, MR. CARR, AND GENTLEMEN,—I have been touched by the kindly words in which your chairman has proposed the health of my wife and myself, and I

¹ The shorthand account of this speech notes, ‘Mr. Botha was observed to applaud this statement.’

cordially thank you for the enthusiasm with which you have drunk the toast. I should like at the same time to say that it is true that my expectations have been fully justified, and I can never sufficiently express my gratitude to all classes of the population in this city for the kindness with which they have received me. I know that that kindness is in part dictated by personal feeling. It is also mainly governed by agreement with the principles of which I am the representative.

When I came to your city I felt that I had entered upon a critical stage in the journey that I had undertaken. There are debated here great problems of vast importance, not only to this community, but to South Africa and the Empire at large. I have been told, not once or twice in the course of my travels, that Johannesburg is not South Africa. In that we shall all heartily agree, but at the same time by its unique position, by the character and intelligence of its people, it must necessarily exercise a potent influence on the future of this great sub-continent. Whether there is to be a united people in South Africa, whether the development which we all anticipate is to proceed rapidly, as we hope, both in town and in country, whether free institutions are to be a success or a failure, whether South Africa is to be a strength or a weakness to the Empire—these are the questions which, for good, or for evil, have to be settled in the course of the next few years, and in their settlement you must necessarily play an important part. You have, as Sir Percy Fitzpatrick has said, a great mission. I think, I hope and believe that you will rise to the height of the great opportunity which is offered to you, and that you will deal with these questions in no petty or parochial spirit, with no restricted limit confined to your personal or city interest. You will look beyond Johannesburg to the whole of the Transvaal, beyond the Transvaal to the whole of South Africa, and beyond South Africa to the great and glorious Empire of which you form a part. And, gentlemen, I base that hope on the character of this population.

It is said—there is an implied reproach in the statement—

that this is a cosmopolitan community. Well, that is true in the same sense in which it is true of many other communities in all parts of the globe where the British flag floats, and where, nevertheless, the citizens of other nations enjoy all the privileges of British rule, all the advantages which that affords, simply on the condition of remaining good citizens in their respective capacities. But if the words mean more than that, they are untrue, because no one can pass through your streets, no one can look, as I did the other day, upon that vast assembly which gathered on the adjoining ground, without seeing that this is in all essentials a British community, animated, therefore, by the ideal which has made us at home what we are, and which has been carried by our children to the uttermost corners of the earth. And, gentlemen, in the first rank of those qualities which I venture to attribute to the British race, I put the sense of public duty, the obligation which every one owes to the country in which he lives, to the town of which he forms a member. I know that in the past it was said of you that you came here to fill your pockets, and went away after that was accomplished, with little care and small interest for the land in which your fortunes had been made. In the early days there may have been some truth in that statement, and I ask you how could it have been otherwise. What temptation was offered to you to take your part in public service, when all its avenues were barred to you by restricted laws? when the men whose energy and skill and intelligence were making the country and developing its resources were told in the plainest language that they were regarded as undesirable aliens? Even now I see that there are obstacles in the way of those who intend to live in the country and make it their own, and among them I would put the excessive cost of living, and the want of sufficient and adequate provision for the education of your children. But those will be removed. Local patriotism will lessen or dispose of these obstacles, and, in the meanwhile, it is only bare justice to say that many of your citizens, those who by position and education are the natural leaders of the people,

are, in spite of the strenuous demand of their ordinary life, willing to make sacrifices of time, money, and labour which are called for in order that they may leave the world a little better than they found it.

Gentlemen, while I congratulate you on the fact that this is a British community, I am not unaware that there are some dangers attending that position, and I am sure that you will recognise that it should never induce you to forget that there are others outside who are worthy of your attention. You have to consider the interests of the country as well as of the town—the interests of our Dutch fellow-subjects as well as of the British. And you know perfectly well that these interests are at bottom identical. The prosperity of the great industry which has Johannesburg as its centre will bring custom to the farmers on the Veld, and the energy of those farmers will bring supplies to the town and will help to reduce that cost of living of which I have spoken.

I say, therefore, that it is essential for the future of the Transvaal and for South Africa at large that there should always be a good understanding between town and country, and between Boer and Briton. I have already the opportunity of meeting many representative men amongst those who were so lately our brave opponents. And I am here to say that interviews I have had with them have left upon my mind a most kindly and favourable impression. I am well aware that much has yet to be done before union of hearts will be established, before all animosities will die out of the land, and above all, before those suspicions of both sides have been removed which have done so much in the past to prejudice our good relations. Perhaps I am inclined to admit that our Boer friends inherit the qualities of their Dutch ancestors, and that it is true of them as it was in the time of Canning that

‘... the fault of the Dutch
Is giving too little and asking too much.’

But, nevertheless, they have, as we all recognise, strenuous and virile qualities. And they will add force and strength

to the free nation which, with their goodwill and their assistance, we have to build up in South Africa. Let me add that I am well satisfied with the progress that has been made. Under circumstances of unexampled difficulty the work of repatriation and re-settlement is proceeding with extreme rapidity, and I cannot express in too high terms my sense of what we owe to those men, from the top to the bottom, who have so devotedly and earnestly addressed themselves to the task, and have carried it through with so much success. All my information leads me to believe that, speaking generally, the Boers are settling down to recover their position, to repair the ravages of war, with the resolution of their race. And I believe that as they find—and they will find it—that we are disposed to treat them justly and generously, that we are ready to respect their feelings—ay, and even to respect their prejudices, if they have them—that we shall be able to remove the prejudices which have so long divided us. . . .

Of the labour question I should say, there is no more vital question at the present time in all South Africa. It was not likely that I should be here and that I should not take every opportunity of informing myself on the subject; and as this question is not, I think, clearly understood at home, if you will bear with me, I should like to say something about it. Now, in the first place, I say this: It is not a question which, as it has perhaps been supposed, concerns the mines alone. On the contrary, every Boer representative who has spoken to me in the course of my journey has called my particular attention to this question. The question of labour is just as important to the farmers as it is to the mine-owners. It is a question which affects not the Transvaal alone, but the whole of South Africa. At the present moment there is not labour enough for the actual development of the industries of the country. It is possible—although I have seen it denied—it is at least possible that the population in South Africa is really sufficient for all its needs provided that the black man can be got to work, but there is, of course, the crux of the

situation. While every civilised nation in the world—and in that I include the population of India and other great Asiatic communities—recognise the duties and obligations of labour, the African alone amongst the great races of the world has been taught by centuries of baneful experience that the only honourable employment for men is fighting, and that labour is the work of slaves. We have done much to put a stop to slavery—in theory we have stopped it, and as a matter of fact we have, over vast districts in South Africa, in the course of the last few years, absolutely abolished the practice of slave-raiding, which has been the cause of the depopulation of Africa. We have abolished slavery in theory, but I think it would surprise some of our philanthropists at home to hear that we are by our policy encouraging it in another form.

The black man, the Kaffir, comes to work at intervals. Like other people he works for an object, but his object is to secure the power of living in idleness ever after. He makes his money and he buys what he calls a wife. If he is ambitious and energetic, he buys two or three, and these so-called wives, who are really slaves, work to keep him in idleness. There is a great objection, which is shared, I believe, by every Englishman, to any form of forced labour, but this is the worst form of it. And I say, and I believe that I shall be supported in the statement by every missionary or, at all events, almost every missionary in Africa, that there is no hope for the improvement and the civilisation of the coloured man in Africa until we have induced him to work, not merely spasmodically in order that after a spell of labour he may lie in idleness under his own fig-tree ever afterwards, but, like his white competitor, to work persistently in order to improve his position and raise his status. Well, there is the problem how to induce in the Kaffir this idea of the dignity and necessity of labour which exists in the minds of every civilised nation on the face of the earth. But there is a second problem connected with this labour question.

I will put it in this way. Is it possible to increase the

amount and the efficiency of the white labour employed ? I know perfectly well that it is at the present time the conviction of the great majority of those who are best qualified to speak on such a subject that anything like the universal substitution of white for black labour would be impossible. I go further and say that even if it were possible, I am not clear that it would be desirable. After all, you have got the black man to deal with. He is increasing. We have stopped his inter-tribal wars. We have stopped the depopulation which has been going on. He will increase with great rapidity, and unless in some way or another he can be settled in regular industry, he will create a danger and a difficulty of the first class. But if we could without attempting absolutely to substitute white labour for black labour—if we could increase the proportion of white labour, that would be a great benefit to the country. Already a great deal has been done. Before the war, or in the early stages of the mines, I believe the proportion was as one white man to nine Kaffirs ; it has now been increased to the proportion of one white man to five Kaffirs. If by any means, by the application of scientific invention and ingenuity, you could increase that proportion still further—to one to two, or one to one—it is impossible to over-rate the political and social benefits which would result. Then, indeed, you would be entitled to say that this is a white man's country. Then, indeed, you would ensure that white labour should not be degraded by its reliance upon black labour, and you would be able, from the surplus that you would provide, to find all that is required in the country for the necessities of other industries. I know that there is much to be done before a result of this kind can be achieved. What is the object ? The object is to have more brains and less muscle. Well, we must have some provision for the cultivation of brains, and if I were to point out at this time what in my opinion is quite the most urgent want of this community, I should say it was the immediate provision of a High School, efficient in every respect, and of a scientific university, specialised according to the needs of the great industries of

the community. Gentlemen, I can hardly doubt that an appeal to local patriotism, to those who have made their fortunes here, will not be without its effect, and that, before long, Johannesburg will possess a university which in its own line will be superior to anything that now exists in the world.

I have laid before you the two problems which interest the whole of Africa. It is not your question alone. Central Africa, West Africa, they are in the same position. Everywhere there is this scarcity of labour, everywhere the same desire to find a remedy. And because it is practically universal I have ventured to impress upon you that you should not waste your time, you should not waste your money, in seeking a solution of your present difficulties in any new and hitherto undiscovered sources of native labour outside your own region. I see by the telegrams to-night that Sir Harry Johnston, than whom there is no greater authority, has returned to the charge, and says that in the future there may be a prospect of obtaining labour from Central Africa and also Nyassaland. He abandons, as I understand, all hope of obtaining it in any quantity from those portions of East Africa which I myself have visited, and, even in regard to countries where, he says, the population is sufficient to spare a surplus, he refers you to the time when the Cape to Cairo Railway will be built. That is no immediate solution, and therefore I say that you have at the present moment to bring to bear all the intelligence which you possess in order to seek and find, if possible, a solution in developing your present supply, or by increasing the efficiency of the white labour you employ. And, gentlemen, it is not until you have exhausted these solutions which are the nearest to you that it would be reasonable that you should turn to that other more drastic remedy of introducing Asiatic labour.

I know that at present suggestions of this kind have not gone beyond ordinary conversation. The idea has not been developed or fully considered, but just think of the difficulties which you would have to overcome. In the first

place, it is clear to me, and no doubt to you, that an overwhelming popular opinion in this very colony is opposed to any such solution. You have first to convert people. Then you will have seen that other great colonies of the Empire, that the opinion of the mother country herself, regards a step of the kind as retrograde and dangerous. And lastly, if those difficulties were removed, there are serious practical obstacles in the way which will meet you at the outset, and which, I think, justify my opinion that it would be very long indeed, even if all other difficulties were removed, before you would obtain any reliable supply from the resources which have been suggested. Well, I have considered whether Government can do anything to help you. Not much. Government is not all-powerful, and Government is generally criticised for doing too much rather than for doing too little. But we may do something, and Lord Milner has agreed to call immediately an inter-colonial conference to consider matters of common interest, including among others native administration and native legislation. I cannot doubt that the representations and opinion of such a conference will be useful and influential, and will necessarily carry much more weight than could be carried by the representations either of a single interest or even of a single colony.

I have another proposal to make to you, but at present it is only a suggestion. If it approves itself to you, I think it may be carried into effect. I have indicated to you the enormous difficulties of the case, and the many points upon which we are still without sufficient information. Now it has occurred to me that, by your goodwill and your desire, the Imperial Government might appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole subject. Such a commission would of course, include representatives of every class and section of the population. It would also include, or should include, men who would be regarded as absolutely impartial—men distinguished by their scientific or personal requirements—and it is possible that if they were able to make a complete inquiry into the whole of the circumstances, their suggestions would be an advantage, and

certainly the influence of such suggestions would be very great. I have only one hesitation in making such a suggestion, and that is, lest if a commission of this kind were appointed, and were to take, as it must take, a considerable time for its investigation, it should have the effect of slackening in a degree your own exertions. You have to work out your own salvation. You are technically a Crown Colony, and technically I am responsible for every act of administration. But let us make no mistake, the conditions are exceptional. They are recognised by the Home Government, and it is our desire and duty to give the same value, here, to your views as we do to the bend and trend of that underlying public opinion that would guide the actions of a self-governing colony. After all, gentlemen, you are only in name a Crown Colony. If you have not at this moment all the privileges of self-government, they are only withheld in the interest of your own security. I think the day is not far distant when you will, like your predecessors, attain to this much coveted position, and you may rest assured that the Home Government have no interest whatever in delaying the consummation. The fear is all the other way. The fear is lest this Government or its successor, tired of the responsibilities and heavy burdens of the task, should too hastily abandon it before the objects of such governments have been fully accomplished. If I am to accept the opinion of this community, the common opinion of all with whom I have spoken, I should say every intelligent and patriotic man agrees that that time has not yet come. Yet there are those who would have it that I must go to London and I must learn from the lips of a capitalist what is the opinion of South Africa, and that I must take it from him that South African people are swelling with indignation under the yoke of Downing Street and are anxious immediately to cast it off.

Well, gentlemen, Downing Street is willing to abdicate; but unless I mistake your opinion, before you ask it to do so you desire to know what is to follow. You desire to know that the Government which will succeed Downing Street

will not set itself immediately to undermine the position which you have won with so much sacrifice of blood and treasure. You do not desire to put into the hands of your opponents the power to gain by political agitation what they have failed to secure with the sword. You do not desire, I imagine, to reproduce the position which in a neighbouring colony induced the majority of British subjects to pray to be relieved of the privileges which they considered to have been abused. And lastly, if I interpret your sentiments aright, neither Boer nor Briton in the Transvaal would wish to get rid of Downing Street in order to substitute Park Lane.

Now, gentlemen, I take your cheers to mean that you would sooner bear the ills you have than fly to others that you wot not of. You have confidence in Lord Milner. You know that you have in him a man devoted to your interests, absolutely disinterested, and sympathetic with the whole population that he has to govern. I feel certain you will all, according to your means and opportunity, co-operate with him in tiding over the inevitable interval which separates you from self-government and in preparing for those free institutions which we are only too anxious to grant you as soon as we are satisfied that the security of the State and the permanence of the existing order will be absolutely maintained. Now, I am ashamed to see at what length I have spoken, but the subjects are important and complicated on which I have had to address you. I will only say one word more. You are a great city, but what you are now is nothing to what you speedily may be. Your growth will proceed, according to all human foresight, in a kind of geometrical progression, and you are destined to become a powerful element in that fabrication of free States shortly to be established, and then to constitute one in the group of free nations gathered round the motherland. I think that is an inspiring thought. The day of small kingdoms with their petty jealousies has passed. The future is with the great empires, and there is no greater empire than the British Empire. Am I not justified in hoping that

there will be none more united ? The mother country has set the example. She has thrown off the apathy and indifference of a past generation. No longer do we hear of statesmen with whom separation from the colonies is almost an object of desire ; and the colonies on their part have reciprocated our feeling. They have abandoned their provincialism. They are eager to claim their part in the glorious Empire which is theirs as well as ours. They are all ready to take the obligations which go with the privileges. This is the spirit which exists, which I desire shall continue. Let us all say with the colonial poet :

‘ Unite the Empire, make it stand compact,
Shoulder to shoulder let its members feel
The touch of human brotherhood, and act
As one great nation, true and strong as steel.’

FEDERATION

CAPETOWN, FEBRUARY 23, 1903

[From a speech in reply to an address from the leaders of the South African Party, headed by the late Mr. Jan Hofmeyr, the leader of the Afrikaner Bund, Mr. Merriman, Mr., now Sir N. F. de Waal, and the late Mr. Sauer. Mr. Merriman introduced the deputation, which ‘desired, by that meeting and by the number of people who had travelled long distances to be present, to show their respect for the office which Mr. Chamberlain held—to show him that there was on their part no wish to have any sullen abstention or aloofness, and also because they honestly believed that, as Mr. Chamberlain himself had said, he was anxious to gather the views of every section and of every political party in the colony.’ The address having been read, Mr. Hofmeyr and Mr. Chamberlain both spoke at length. In thanking Mr. Chamberlain on the conclusion of the proceedings, Mr. Merriman said that ‘with most of what he had said’ the deputation was ‘in cordial agreement. There were only a few points of difference—healthy difference.’]

. . . You also refer, and this is the last reference, to the question of federation. Gentlemen, I think you will have seen by my speeches that I heartily share your hopes in regard to this matter. I wish I could think I should live to see the fulfilment of this great idea, the idea that the

colonies of the Empire in great divisions should be gathered into federated nations. In these nations I again should like to see federation carried even further, and to see them united in one great Parliament of the Imperial race. That end I desire most earnestly, and nothing that I can do will be wanting to hasten it. But, on the other hand, remember that undue hurry might be fatal to our desires. Nothing could be worse than federation forced upon a people before they had had time thoroughly to grasp its meaning and to understand how it would affect them personally in their several States, and come to something like a general conclusion upon the subject. But what I do press upon you is that now is the time for discussion; the great constitutions of the world have been brought into being after a lengthy parturition; the constitution of the United States of America, the constitutions of Australia and Canada were all the subject of lengthy discussion, and only when the general principles had gradually worked themselves out was the common consent of all put on paper and embodied in a document which, once promulgated, can hardly afterwards in any way be altered. Subject, however, to that very reasonable plea, nothing would please me better than to know that this federation which we all keep in view would come within the living generation.

Now, gentlemen, in conclusion, may I make one last appeal to you. You have come to see me from many districts; you will be able, if you please, to carry back my voice. I have come to South Africa, as has been said, at some inconvenience, and I think you will judge from what you have read that my tour has not been one entirely of pleasure, but much more one of business and hard work. I have had, I assure you, no personal motives, and I have no political ambition to gratify. I am an older man, I expect, than all, or, at any rate, most in this room, and my time for active service to the Empire is necessarily coming to a close. But I have come here, and it would be the greatest happiness of the last act of statesmanship of my life should it be to do something to bring about union between those two

racés which, as you say in your address, are so alike in temperament, in religion, and ought to be closely united. I have tried to perform this mission of mine in an impartial spirit. I have not kept back anything that was in my mind. I have said things, I dare say, which some of you do not like ; I have said other things which I know perfectly well the party opposed to you do not like ; and the fact that I have to some extent displeased both is perhaps a guarantee that I have adopted a fair and reasonable view. At all events, what I have said I have said to you frankly and without reserve, because I believe we should never understand each other if we did not tell each other the truth. Therefore it is true that where I have felt you to be wrong I have said so openly ; and, on the other hand, I have not failed to point out the faults which have been committed on the other side. Well, now, I must come to a close. I will tell you my last impression. I go away hopeful—most hopeful and confident, so far as the rest of South Africa is concerned ; and sanguine, even here, where I have had to observe a state of feeling which I hope is passing away. And to you I say it lies in your power to fulfil this hope. You, exercising your personal influence in your several districts, can do infinitely more than I can do by a few speeches made here and there, the terms of which may not even reach those for whom they were intended. Remember, gentlemen, that upon you a great responsibility lies. This is no ordinary time. What are you doing ? You are engaged with us in building up a new nation. What that nation is to be, what sort of edifice is to be raised upon the ruins of the past, depends largely upon what you do now, to-day, and to-morrow, and not upon what has happened in the past. You have a clean sheet upon which you can write your impressions and your desires. Well, therefore, I accept, and would not wish otherwise, that you should fight out your local battles, and I have only to say that I hope that the best man may win. But I ask you so to conduct this controversy that you may get rid of that kind of personal and social animosity which would in any way

prevent you from co-operating for the common good, not merely for the interests of South Africa, where no doubt your chief interests lie, but also for that interest, that larger country, that Imperial dominion which, as I pointed out, is yours now as well as ours, and in which I hope the time is coming when you will take with us an equal interest.

THE NEEDS AND DUTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

CAPETOWN, FEBRUARY 24, 1903

[On the eve of sailing for England, Mr. Chamberlain was entertained at a public dinner in the Drill Hall, Capetown, described as 'a vast gathering representative of all shades of political opinion.' The Lord Mayor, who presided, was supported by the Chief Justice, the Right Hon. Sir J. H., now Lord de Villiers, by the Prime Minister, and by Mr. Hofmeyr. The following speech, in reply to the toast of His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, coupled with the health of Mrs. Chamberlain, was Mr. Chamberlain's farewell to South Africa.]

YOUR EXCELLENCY, MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—
I am grateful to you, Mr. Mayor, for the cordial terms in which you have proposed the health of my wife and myself, although I cannot for my own part accept altogether your description of me as the political Sandow of the British Empire. But I do appreciate the cordiality with which we have been received in the Cape Peninsula, and I shall carry away with me a feeling of gratitude for all the courtesy and kindness which we have received during our tour. It is, however, with mixed feelings that I now address you. The hour of parting has come, and though you, Mr. Mayor, are able to regard it with cheerfulness, I confess that it is not without some sorrow that I bring to a close a journey so memorable in many respects, so interesting, and so satisfactory. But the play is over, the curtain has been rung down, and here I stand in front of the footlights of that great theatre of South Africa, which has been the scene of so many an eventful drama, to say to you a few words of thanks for all your generous appreciation of the difficulties

of the task which I undertook, of your readiness to overlook any faults in the performance, and of the strength and encouragement that you have given to me by your sympathetic applause. Mr. Mayor, you have asked for a summary. I think the time is too early for me to go into any detail as to the results of this new and unprecedented experiment. I have crowded into the last two months work and impressions which might have been expanded into two years. The labour has been unremitting, but the work has been intensely interesting, and so far as I am concerned the advantages which I have derived are sufficient to compensate for any trouble or labour that may have been involved. Gentlemen, I came to these shores as an optimist, and I leave them with the firm conviction that Providence, which out of evil still educes good, will evolve compensation for the suffering and misery which a great war involves, for all the disturbance which this sub-continent has suffered. I leave this shore more convinced than ever that the forces—the natural forces which are drawing you together—are more potent than those evil influences which would tend to separate you.

The material interests of South Africa weigh heavily in the balance in favour of you. The first need of the country is development. You want more capital, more confidence, more population; better communications, energy, and enterprise everywhere. Above all, South Africa needs the best capacity of all its children. There are great questions which loom in the near future, and upon which your prosperity and position depend. You have to decide as to the relations between the different States of South Africa, and in the discussions which are imminent it behoves every State to speak as one people, and not as a house divided against itself. You have to make preparation for that ultimate federation of South Africa which is destined I hope in the near future to establish a new nation under the British flag, which shall be daughter in her mother's house and mistress in her own. These are the questions which concern South Africa. Your

fate is in your own hands. It is not the Imperial Government to which you will look for assistance, nor which can properly interfere in these matters. Do not anticipate any other meddling on the part of Downing Street, or of any section of the British people. No doubt there are individuals here and there, generally those who speak in the loudest voice and in the highest terms of the virtue of self-government, who nevertheless can never refrain from giving, unasked, their opinion upon your local affairs. But, gentlemen, the good sense of the British people will never tolerate any intermeddling in the purely domestic concerns of the people to whom it has conceded the fullest liberties of government and which is working out its destiny on its own lines. But then with this great power which is entrusted to you there comes a great responsibility. And in a time which you might almost say is critical, it is your business to be guided by that higher statesmanship that knows how, under such circumstances, to put aside all petty and personal interests and distinctions of parties or of race. Thus it shall be possible to rise to that higher conception of duty which embraces the whole people in its far-seeing previsions.

And then, gentlemen, if your material interests tend to bring you together, what is it that can keep you apart? There is sentiment—sentiment which is often more powerful than material interest; sentiment most powerful for good, but unfortunately sometimes influential for evil; sentiment which, on this continent, unfortunately in the past, has maintained a distinction of race, has cherished the animosities of the past, has nurtured suspicions which had so baneful a result. But why should we dwell on the past? Let us turn our eyes to the future. It has been my one object during this visit to do everything that one man can do,—and perhaps that is not much,—it has been my endeavour to do everything in my power to allay suspicions, to prevent the perpetuation of the differences which have done so much harm, the misunderstandings which have been the basis of all the ills with which

you have been afflicted. And I can say that throughout I have spoken frankly. I have done this to all sorts and conditions of men, without respect to party or any other considerations. And I have invited an equal frankness from those who have come to see me. I hope that, while I have extenuated nothing, I have set down nought in malice. I do not presume to suppose that all those whose acquaintance I have made have agreed with everything that I have said. But, on the other hand, I am certain that in no case was offence given, and I believe in no case was offence taken. Even those 'incidents,' as they are termed in the language of the Press, to which occasionally too much importance may have been given—even these have tended to clear the air and to promote a better understanding. In our new colonies, all my information points to the fact that reconciliation between the two races which have hitherto been divided is proceeding apace. Only yesterday I heard of the formation in the Orange River Colony of a new association which, I hope, may develop into a most important organisation. This is a Farmers' Association, of which the temporary president is a distinguished general, who was the leader of the National Scouts, and of which the vice-president is another distinguished general, who was one of the deputation which waited upon me with General Christian De Wet, and who himself fought to the end against us in the recent war. If the men in that position can consent to forget their differences, who can doubt that the rank and file will follow their example? I am convinced of the sincerity with which the leaders of the people in those two colonies have agreed to accept the situation which has been brought about by the war, and I have no doubt whatever that the people there will follow the patriotic advice that was given to them by General De la Rey;—they will be as loyal to their new Government as they ever were to their own.

Of course, there are rocks ahead; there are difficulties in the political situation. I have no doubt whatever they will be surmounted, as much greater difficulties have again

and again been surmounted in our colonial administration ; and that under the firm and sympathetic policy of Lord Milner if that is continued, the two new colonies will be amongst the most prosperous and the most contented of the dominions of the Crown. I know there are people who talk of Lord Milner, whom perhaps they have never seen and with whom I am sure they are not personally acquainted, as if he were a hard man, inclined always to arbitrary and even tyrannical methods. There can be no greater travesty of the truth than that. And if these people had seen him, as I have had the privilege of seeing him, at work, if they could have seen his patient and personal attention to every grievance that was brought to his knowledge, his devotion to the details of every branch of his administration, his constant endeavour to find new methods of benefiting every class of the population, his earnest desire to help the needs of those who are in trouble, to restore those who have suffered during the war to their old prosperity—I say if they could have seen this, they would themselves have been the first to be ashamed of their suspicions. I say that as to the new colonies, I have no doubt whatever as to the future. When I entered your city the other day, following that practice of frank speech to which I have referred, I thought it necessary to tell you of the impressions which have been produced upon my mind, and to say that here in the premier colony of South Africa was the point of danger.

Now the incidents of the last week, the opportunities which have been afforded to me of making the acquaintance of representatives of all opinions, have had the effect of relieving my anxiety, and I shall go away with the well-grounded hope that a new era is beginning, a new chapter has been opened, and that this colony will once more take its proper place and lead the way in a policy of reconciliation and of union. On Saturday last I received with the most unfeigned satisfaction, the assurances that were given me then by the trusted leader of a great party in this country. Assurances so full, so definite, and so authoritative, that I cannot doubt their publication, their circulation

throughout the country into the agricultural districts, will have its effect—its natural effect—in stopping any further manifestation of ill-feeling, directed against any man on account of his loyalty, and that assurance was given to me without any conditions, without any qualifications. I say that the leaders of the party to which I refer have done their duty. But, then, there is always the pessimist, and the pessimists began to say, ‘Oh, yes, those assurances are all very well, but are they sincere?’ They will either be rejected by the other party, or they will be received with a grudging and ungenerous acceptance.’

I have the answer in my hand. This morning, unsolicited, I received a message on behalf of the other great party in the State, and it is to the following effect: the Progressive party accept with pleasure Mr. Hofmeyr’s assurance that he, and those associated with him, will do their utmost to allay race-feeling in the country, and eliminate the racial question from the coming political struggle. This has always been the aim of the Progressive party. They accept Mr. Hofmeyr’s promise of co-operation in that respect in all sincerity. Now, I say, the other party have done their duty. Is it not an advance in Cape politics? Am I not entitled to be optimistic? Of course, I understand that this does not affect your ordinary political differences, which might exist in every free community. They constitute a sort of healthy competition. The ‘outs’ always want to be in, and the ‘ins’ always want to keep their place. It is not my business, it is not my desire, to compose such differences as these. On the contrary, I am ready to stand outside the ‘ring’ and see a fair fight. But what rejoices me is this, that in the future these mutual assurances can go far to eliminate from this scuffle the racial antagonism which has been the bane of South Africa, and do away with that odious distribution of political parties into loyal on the one side and disloyal on the other. Now, gentlemen, let us consider for a moment the important consequences which may follow from this new condition of things. If the declarations which have been made achieve the results which I expect,

and which we have the right to expect from them, then loyalty will no longer, in any place, or under any circumstances, be regarded as a crime. And rebellion will under no circumstances be exalted into a virtue. If this be the result, irritation will die down, and then we ought to be able to approach the questions which still remain as a result of the war in a calmer and more conciliatory spirit. In that case, I do not suppose that there is any one belonging to any section of any party who will desire to revive all the irritation, all the misunderstanding, all the ill-feeling that may have been created by the administration—the necessary administration—of martial law. What practical result could follow upon any such inquiry? While on the other hand, it would open up an endless vista of new subjects of disturbance and animosity.

On the other hand, there is the question which has been in many men's mouths in the last few months, which also may assume a different aspect—the question, I mean, of clemency—of clemency exerted on behalf of those who are now suffering from their faults during the recent war, and are still confined. Now, when this matter has been raised, in the course of my recent journey, I have tried to make four things clear: in the first place, that clemency is a matter of grace and cannot be yielded to pressure; in the second place, I tried to impress upon my hearers my own sense of the gravity of rebellion, as a political crime of the most serious magnitude, under a liberal constitution and in a free country; but, on the other hand, I have also pointed out that the object of all punishment is prevention, and is not vindictive. If the object of punishment has been secured, the necessity—the argument in favour of the continuance of punishment—is but futile. And lastly, I have said that this question is not really a question for me or for His Majesty's Government, but that it had been distinctly reserved by terms of peace for the self-governing colonies concerned. There the question stands now. In this colony I do not gather that the Government has any desire to press punishment beyond its preventive stage, while the Oppo-

sition, by the mouths of their own leaders, have stated that it is their anxiety, as early as may be safe, to open the prison doors. As I have said, I have no authority, no claim, and no right to interfere.

But I may be permitted, perhaps, in these closing words to express a hope that there should be forthcoming in the near future such evidence of a restoration of mutual good feeling throughout the country, such proof that the animosities of which we have complained are dying away, that the Government may feel justified in cleaning the slate and in restoring to their homes those whose offences have been purely political, and who have not committed ordinary criminal offences. When that time has arrived is, as I have said, a matter not for me, but for the responsible governments of the colonies concerned. But I cannot resist a hopeful expectation that it may not be long before the echoes of the war will have entirely died down. Then I look forward to the growth of a new nation here in South Africa, as loyal in the true sense of the word, as Imperial in the best sense of the word, as any of the possessions of the British Crown. Will you be offended if I say that I think that the colonies of South Africa have been in the past too provincial? You are destined to be members of an Empire with a great mission of civilisation, with a power such as has never been possessed before of influencing the future of the whole world, and I want you without distinction of race to feel in your hearts the pride of possession, to recognise that this Empire is yours, and to do that by virtue of your assumption of your share of its obligations. In this larger conception of Imperial duty, local politics, important no doubt in their way, will still assume only their proportionate significance, and larger interests, and nobler ideals, and a wider patriotism will take their place. You may yet see a teeming population of the various races, of divergent interests, that go to make up the British Empire, united by a common bond—one life, one flag, one fleet, one throne.

VI. IMPERIAL UNION AND TARIFF REFORM

'I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not pretend that commercial union with the colonies, or the recognition of the principle that the component parts of an Empire should treat each other more generously than they treat the stranger outside the gates, would by themselves give to us all the organised union that we desire.

'But I do say that it would be the first step in the desired direction. Carlyle says: "Do the Duty which lies nearest thee, which thou knowest to be a Duty. Thy second Duty will already have become clearer." Preference may lead ultimately to Free Trade in the Empire—it is at least an advance towards it. Commercial union has in other cases preceded political organisation. A scheme of common defence may follow the development of common interests.

'It is to the people, and not the politicians, that I appeal in this great argument.

'Without the indomitable courage and devotion of Nelson, the Empire could hardly have survived its childhood. Courage and devotion, even though they be of a different kind, are now required from the statesmen and politicians who have to consolidate it, and above all from the people of the lands that compose it, who must rise to a just conception of their own responsibilities and provide the enthusiasm and the force that can alone command success and secure for their descendants an inheritance greater than any ever dreamed of by ancient or modern conquerors.'—MR. CHAMBERLAIN, on 'Nelson's Year.'

THE following speeches, or extracts from speeches, belong to the famous series delivered in the cause of Tariff Reform as a step to Imperial union. On May 15, 1903, Mr. Chamberlain addressed his constituents at Birmingham on his return from his South African journey, and, in Mr. Balfour's words, 'initiated the acute stage of the fiscal controversy.' That controversy was not new. In his Budget of April 1902 Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, afterwards Lord St. Aldwyn, had put a duty on corn of one shilling per quarter, which it was estimated would bring in two and a quarter millions annually.

This duty, which, despite warning shrieks to the contrary, had not affected the price of bread, Mr. Chamberlain and other members of the Cabinet desired to retain as a first stage in a preferential treatment of her colonies by Great Britain; and, before leaving England for South Africa in December 1902, he asked for an assurance both as to the retention of the duty and the reason to be given for retaining it. The new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr.—later Lord—Ritchie declined to give such an undertaking at this date, and Mr. Chamberlain sailed without it, though having, in Mr. Balfour's words, 'just reason to suppose' that the Cabinet with this exception had agreed to his policy.¹ On his return to England he was informed that Mr. Ritchie—a strong Free Trader converted from the Protectionists—refused to continue the duty as an incident or instalment of a preferential policy, although he was prepared, in deference to the views of his colleagues, to retain it on another ground and pretext. Faced with this condition Mr. Chamberlain expressed his frank indifference to the corn duty except as a point of preferential policy, and Mr. Ritchie's Budget of April 23 omitted the shilling duty.

But the *volte face* had forced Mr. Chamberlain's hand; while he mused the fire kindled, then spake he with his mouth—not as speak politicians. A few days after the first blast, of May 15, he told the House of Commons: 'If you are to give a preference to the colonies you must put a tax on food.' This, to be sure, was to put the worst side of his case foremost, to give points to misrepresentation. But electioneering was not in the mind of the missionary of Empire. . . .

Of the speeches of May 15 and later, Mr. Chamberlain—in an introduction to a reprint of some of them by the Tariff Reform League, November 1903—says that the issues raised in them 'are few and easy to understand. The changes that have taken place since the adoption of Free Trade nearly

¹ See *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, vol. ii. p. 356. Compare also pp. 298-299—Mr. Balfour's letter to the Duke of Devonshire.

sixty years ago in the conditions of international exchange, in the comparative position of foreign nations, and, above all, in our relations with our own colonies, seem to point conclusively to the necessity of a reconsideration of our fiscal system.

'The original object of Mr. Cobden and his colleagues was to secure a free exchange of products between the nations of the world at their natural price, but for many years the example of the open door set by the United Kingdom has not been followed by other countries, and hostile tariffs have everywhere interfered with the natural course of trade.

'These tariffs, avowedly designed to exclude British manufactures, have been supported by the operation of bounties, subsidies, and trusts; while foreign producers have been enabled, partly by the same means, and partly by the lower standard of living to which their working classes are accustomed, to undersell the British manufacturer in neutral markets, and even seriously to attack his home trade.

'The doctrinaire Free Traders have no remedy to propose for this state of things, which, indeed, they either deny, or else ascribe to the want of enterprise and intelligence on the part of our manufacturers, to the ignorance and incapacity of our people, or to the tyrannical action of the Trade Unions.

'The Tariff Reformers, on the other hand, believe that by recovering their freedom of action, and by re-arming ourselves with the weapon of a moderate tariff, we may still defend our home market against unfair competition, and may, at the same time, secure a modification of foreign tariffs which would open the way to a fairer exchange of our respective products than we have hitherto been able to obtain.

'But they attach even greater importance to the possibility of securing by preferential and reciprocal arrangements with our colonies a great development of trade within the Empire and a nearer approach to a commercial union which, in some shape or another, must precede or

accompany closer political relations, and without which, as all history shows, no permanent co-operation is possible.

‘They believe that these objects can be promoted, without loss to any class or any individual, by a slight transfer of existing taxes which will not increase national burdens, but will raise the revenue required for defence and administration in such a way as to develop our inter-Imperial trade to the mutual benefit both of the colonies and the mother country, while adding greatly to the amount of employment for our ever-growing population.

‘The questions thus raised, although they interest every class, are more vitally important to working men than to any other, since they alone depend upon their daily employment for their daily subsistence.

‘To the manufacturer and the capitalist the essential consideration is security for his investments which, under present conditions, are always liable to a kind of interference against which it is impossible for him to provide. His foreign competitor, unassailable in his home market, can safely issue forth to attack him, while he is incapable of retaliation, and powerless to defend himself against the new methods of foreign competition.

‘I have often wondered,’ Mr. Chamberlain concludes, in his survey of November 9, 1903, ‘that we have never adopted the principle of the Referendum as practised in Switzerland, and also in many parts of the United States of America. It is the only way in which the decision of great national questions can be separated from all the complicated issues of party government. At a General Election the voter is influenced partly by his desire to see his own party in office, and partly by his views on a number of special questions, many of them purely local or even personal.

‘If, in the case of a new policy, not necessarily political, it were possible to eliminate all side issues, we might have a national verdict which all sections would accept, and which would be given without reference to the perennial struggle between the “Outs” and the “Ins” which is at present the chief occupation of political life.

‘In the absence of such a machinery for testing public opinion, I will not venture on any prediction as to the exact time at which a conservative nation such as ours will decide on the adoption of new methods to meet new conditions, but I have no doubt whatever that the policy of free imports is doomed, and I earnestly hope that the policy of mutual preference between the different parts of the British Empire may be accepted before it is too late for us to avail ourselves of the opportunity within our grasp.’

It is unnecessary to recite the progress of subsequent events from May 1903 onwards; how the problem grew, dividing members of the Unionist party and backed upon either side by economists of high authority; the resignation (Sept. 18, 1903) from the Unionist ministry of Mr. Ritchie and its other leading Free Traders, but also of Mr. Chamberlain—loyal to Mr. Balfour and his general policy, but compelled to fight from without; going, in his own words, in front of the army as pioneer, to go back to the army if it was attacked; the long succeeding struggle in which, amid obscure direction and divided counsels on the one hand, the sharp assault of practised politicians on the other, and the complication of the problem with party political issues, the movement Mr. Chamberlain inaugurated seems steadily to grow, although the issue is postponed. Mr. Chamberlain’s own active part ceased with his illness in July 1906. He had combined loyalty to his leader with loyalty to an idea, and had given up a material part of a great position rather than compromise with the faith which was in him. The historian of the future may be left to deal with the Tariff Reform campaign which began in 1903. What is beyond doubt now or hereafter is the sincerity and patriotism of the chief who led in it.

A DEMAND FOR INQUIRY

BIRMINGHAM, MAY 15, 1903

[At a meeting of the Unionists of West Birmingham, called to welcome their member on the conclusion of his official tour in South Africa.]

I THANK you from the bottom of my heart for the warmth of your welcome, and for the assurance, which is always delightful to me, of your continued confidence and support. Your chairman is quite right when he says that I am proud of being the representative of West Birmingham, an essentially working-class constituency. I have ventured before now, in the House of Commons, to claim that I represented more labour than any other Labour representative. And I do not think the less of that position, because I believe that I represent Labour in no narrow and selfish sense. I represent Labour as it constitutes the majority of the people of this country, and as it is characterised by the virtues and the qualities that have made this country what it is—by Labour, that is, which thinks not of itself as a class, opposed to any other class in the community, but as responsible for the obligations of the country and the Empire to which it belongs, and as participating in all that concerns the prosperity and the welfare of the whole.

It is two months now since I returned from a voyage which will always be one of the most memorable incidents of my life; but I have not forgotten—I shall never forget—that my constituents and fellow-citizens sent me forth to make that great experiment encouraged by their good wishes and by the most splendid and inspiring demonstration that was ever accorded to any public man. It was to me also a matter of the greatest gratification that, when I returned, the first to greet me on these shores was a deputation from you, my friends and constituents, assuring me of your welcome home and of your congratulations. And, during the interval between those two events, I was constantly reminded of you. I could come to no great city in South Africa, hardly to any village or wayside station, in

any of the colonies, but always, it seemed to me, I was cheered by the presence and the enthusiasm of Birmingham men, proud to recall their connection with our city, and anxious to prove that neither time nor distance had lessened their affection for their old home. I go back often to my old associations. I think of the time when I entered upon public life, thanks to the support of those who, in St. Paul's Ward, sent me to the Town Council of Birmingham. And, amongst all my recollections, of none am I prouder than of the fact that I was permitted at that time to co-operate with men, then our leaders, most of whom have passed away, but who have left behind them an imperishable legacy, who have impressed upon us, and instilled into our lives, that intense feeling of local patriotism which makes it the duty of every Birmingham man, at home and abroad, to maintain and to raise the reputation of the city from which he came.

On my return, as is right and proper, I am called upon to make my first political speech to my constituents. You will excuse me if I am a little out of practice. It is true that in South Africa I did a great deal of talking; but I am bound to say that my party weapons are a little rusty. When I was in South Africa, it was not of our controversial politics that I was thinking; and for a considerable period my whole mind was turned to the problems connected with the birth of a new nation in South Africa, and, above all, to the question of how it was possible to reconcile the two strong races who were bound to live together there as neighbours, and who I hope will live together as friends. I had to think also of how this new nation would stand, how these races would be concerned in the future of the Empire which belongs to both of them, Dutch and English—great people with many virtues in common, but still with great differences. Who would wish that the traditions of either should be forgotten or that their peculiarities should disappear? And yet we have to make of them a united nation. Here, in the United Kingdom, we have different races but one people. It would be rather difficult, I imagine, that an Englishman should feel exactly the same in regard, let us say, to Barnockburn, as a Scotsman

would feel. Yet both Scotch and English may equally be proud of having had their full part in Waterloo or the Alma. Why should it not be the same in South Africa? I ask of no Dutchman that he should forget any of his traditions, of which he may justly be proud, or abandon any of the peculiarities or prejudices of his race, any more than I would ask it of any Briton. But my confident hope and belief are that in the future both these representatives of different races will be able to co-operate, and create for themselves a common existence in which they may have a common pride. It is therefore to the Empire, with all that that means, that I look to produce that union in South Africa which we all desire to achieve.

But you will understand that in the absorbing preoccupation of these thoughts, in a work which strained every nerve, and which filled every waking moment, I had no time to keep myself abreast of purely party politics in this country. I am still under the glamour of this new experience. My ideas even now run more on those questions which are connected with the future of the Empire than upon the smaller controversies upon which depend the fate of by-elections, and sometimes even the fate of Governments. When you are 6000 miles away from the House of Commons, it is perfectly extraordinary how events and discussions and conflicts of opinion present themselves in different—I think I may even say in truer—proportion. You are excited at home about an Education Bill—about Temperance Reform—about local finance. But these things matter no more to South Africa, to Canada, to Australia, than their local affairs matter to you. On the other hand, everything that touches Imperial policy, everything which affects their interests as well as yours, has for them, as it ought to have for us, a supreme importance. And our Imperial policy is vital to them and vital to us. Upon that Imperial policy, and upon what you do in the next few years, depends the tremendous issue whether this great Empire of ours is to stand together, one free nation, if necessary, against all the world, or whether it is to fall apart into separate States, each selfishly seeking its own interest alone—losing sight

of the common weal, and losing also all the advantages which union alone can give.

There must be ups and downs in politics. I have had now a long experience, and I will safely predict of any Government, that if it endeavours honestly to grapple with the great problems of its time, it will lose a certain amount of support. You cannot deal with any domestic question, and find an absolutely united party to support you ; and the bolder your policy, the more drastic the changes which you propose to bring about, the more certain it is that you will pay the price, for the time at any rate, in the votes of a certain number of those whose support you greatly value. Well, but what is the business of a Government ? Under ordinary circumstances, the business of a Government is to spend itself in doing what it thinks to be right. There comes a time when it has spent all that it has ; and then it makes room for its successor. And let me say in all seriousness that, if I were assured that the main lines of our Imperial and National policy, those things which touch our existence, were secured ; if I could feel that there was that continuity in foreign and colonial policy which I have known to exist in past times, I for one should be very willing indeed to allow to my political opponents their chance in their turn to try their hands at the difficult domestic problems with which we have had to deal. After eight years of such strenuous work as seldom falls to the lot of politicians, I can say for myself—and I believe I can say for all my colleagues—that I should rejoice if I could be relieved, at all events for a time, and if I could occupy, instead of the post of a prominent actor, the much more easy and less responsible post of universal critic.

I did not require to go to South Africa in order to be convinced that the pervading sentiment of Imperialism has obtained deep hold on the minds and hearts of our children beyond the seas. It has had a hard life of it. This feeling of Imperial patriotism was checked for a generation by the apathy and the indifference which were the characteristics of our former relations with our colonies. It was discouraged by our apparent acceptance of the doctrines of the Little

Englishers, of the provincial spirit which taught us to consider ourselves alone, and to regard with indifference all that concerned those, however loyal they might be, who left these shores in order to go to our colonies abroad. But it was never extinguished. The embers were still alight, and when, in the late war, this old country of ours showed that it was still possessed by the spirit of our ancestors, that it was still prepared to count no sacrifice that was necessary in order to maintain the honour and the interests of the Empire that was committed to its charge, then you found such a response from your brethren, your children, across the seas, as had never been known before, astonishing the world by an undeniable proof of affection and regard. I have said that that was a new chapter, the beginning of a new era. Is it to end there? Is it to end with the end of the war, with the termination of the crisis that brought it forth? Are we to sink back to the old policy of selfish isolation which went very far to try, and even to sap, the loyalty of our colonial brethren? I do not think so. I think these larger issues touch the people of this country. I think they have awakened to the enormous importance of a creative time like the present, and will take advantage of the opportunity that is offered to make permanent that which has begun so well. Remember we are an old country. We proceed here upon settled lines. We have our quarrels and our disputes, and we pass legislation which may be good or bad, but which, at any rate, can be altered. But we go towards an object which is sufficiently defined. We know that, whatever changes there may be—whatever meandering of the current—at all events the main stream will ultimately reach its appointed destination. This is the result of centuries of constitutional progress and freedom.

But the Empire is not old. The Empire is new. The Empire is in its infancy. Now is the time when we can mould that Empire, and we and those who live with us can decide its future destinies.

Just let us consider what that Empire is. I am not

going to-night to speak of those hundreds of millions of our Indian and native fellow-subjects for whom we have become responsible. It is upon us that the obligation lies to give them good government now, and in every way to promote their future development and prosperity. And some day it might be worth my while, and it might be possible, to discuss with you all the important questions which such an enormous obligation imposes. But to-night I put that aside, and I consider only our relations to our own kinsfolk, to that white British population that constitutes the majority in the great self-governing colonies of the Empire. What is our position in regard to them? Here, in the United Kingdom, there are some forty millions of us. Outside, there are more than ten millions either directly descended from ancestors who left this country, or persons who, themselves in their youth, left this country in order to find their fortunes in our possessions abroad. Now how long do you suppose that this proportion of the population is going to endure? How long are we going to be four times as many as our kinsfolk abroad? The development of those colonies has been delayed by many reasons—partly, as I think, by our inaction, partly by the provincial spirit which we have not done enough to discourage, that spirit which attaches undue importance to the local incidents and legislation of each separate State, and gives insufficient regard to the interests of the whole, but mainly, probably, by a more material reason, by the fact that the United States of America have offered a greater attraction to British immigration. But that is changing. The United States of America, with all their vast territory, are filling up, and even now we hear of thousands and tens of thousands of emigrants leaving the United States of America in order to take up the fresh and rich lands of our Dominion of Canada. And it seems to me to be not at all an impossible assumption that, before the end of this half-century, we may find that our fellow-subjects beyond the seas may be more numerous than we are at home.

I want you to look forward. I want you to consider the infinite importance of this, not only to yourselves but to

your descendants. Now is the time when you can exert influence: Do you wish that, if these ten millions become forty millions, they shall still be closely, intimately, affectionately united to you? Or do you contemplate the possibility of their being separated, going off each in his own direction under a separate flag? Think what it means to your power and influence as a country; think what it means to your position among the nations of the world; think what it means to your trade and commerce. I put that last. The influence of the Empire is the thing I think most about, and that influence, I believe, will always be used for the peace and civilisation of the world.

But the question of trade and commerce is one of the greatest importance. Unless that is satisfactorily settled, I, for one, do not believe in a continued union of the Empire. I am told—I hear it stated again and again by what I believe to be the representatives of a small minority of the people of this country, whom I describe, because I know no other words for them, as Little Englanders—I hear it stated by them, what is a fact, that our trade with our colonies is less than our trade with foreign countries, and therefore it appears to be their opinion that we should do everything in our power to cultivate that trade with foreigners, and that we can safely disregard the trade with our children. Now, sir, that is not my conclusion. My conclusion is exactly the opposite. I say it is the business of British statesmen to do everything they can, even at some present sacrifice, to keep the trade of the colonies with Great Britain; to increase that trade, to promote it, even if in doing so we lessen somewhat the trade with our foreign competitors. Are we doing everything at the present time to direct the patriotic movement not only here, but through all the colonies, in the right channel? Are we, in fact, by our legislation, by our action, making for union, or are we drifting to separation? That is a critical issue. In my opinion, the germs of a Federal Union that will make the British Empire powerful and influential for good beyond the dreams of any one now living are in the soil; but it is a tender and delicate plant, and requires careful handling.

I wish you would look back to our history. Consider what might have been, in order that you may be influenced now to do what is right. Suppose that when self-government was first conceded to these colonies, the statesmen who gave it had had any idea of the possibilities of the future—do you not see that they might have laid, broad and firm, the foundations of an Imperial edifice of which every part would have contributed something to the strength of the whole? But in those days the one idea of statesmen was to get rid of the whole business. They believed that separation must come. What they wanted to do was to make it smooth and easy, and none of these ideas which subsequent experience has put into our minds appear ever to have been suggested to them. By their mistakes and by their neglect our task has been made more difficult—more difficult, but not impossible. There is still time to consolidate the Empire. We also have our chance, and it depends upon what we do now whether this great idea is to find fruition, or whether we must for ever dismiss it from our consideration and accept our fate as one of the dying empires of the world.

Now, what is the meaning of an empire? What does it mean to us? We have had a little experience. We have had a war—a war in which the majority of our children abroad had no apparent direct interest. We had no hold over them, no agreement with them of any kind, and yet, at one time during this war, by their voluntary decision, at least 50,000 colonial soldiers were standing shoulder to shoulder with British troops, displaying a gallantry equal to their own and the keenest intelligence. It is something for a beginning; and if this country were in danger—I mean if we were, as our forefathers were, face to face some day, which Heaven forbid, with some great coalition of hostile nations, when we had, with our backs to the wall, to struggle for our very lives—it is my firm conviction that there is nothing within the power of these self-governing colonies that they would not do to come to our aid. I believe their resources, in men and in money, would be at the disposal of the mother country in such an event. That

is something which it is wonderful to have achieved, and which it is worth almost any sacrifice to maintain.

So far as men are concerned, and the personal sacrifice involved in risking life and encountering hardship, the colonies did their duty in the late war. If we turn to another question, the question of the share they bore in the pecuniary burden which the war involved, well, I think they might have done more. I did not hesitate to tell my fellow-subjects in the colonies of South Africa, whether in the new colonies or in the old ones, that though they had done much, they had not done enough, that they had left, substantially, the whole burden on the shoulders of the mother country ; and that, in the future, if they valued Empire and its privileges they must be prepared to take a greater share of its obligations. If I had been speaking in Australia, or in Canada, I would have said the same thing, and perhaps I should have been inclined to say it even in stronger terms. And if I may judge by the reception of my utterances in South Africa, I should give no offence by this frank speaking. All have done something ; and to my mind, it is a great thing to get the principle accepted. I think it depends upon us whether in future this principle shall be applied with greater liberality, or whether we are all to fall back, each to care for himself and ' the devil take the hindmost.'

Sir, my idea of British policy—I mean the policy of the United Kingdom—is that here, at the beginning of things, at the beginning of this new chapter, we should show our cordial appreciation of the first step taken by our colonies to show their solidarity with us. Every advance which they make should be reciprocated. We should ourselves set a great example by acknowledging the community of interest, and, above all, that community of sacrifice on which alone the Empire can permanently rest. I have admitted that the colonies have hitherto been backward in their contributions towards Imperial defence. They are following their own lines. I hope they will do better in the future ; but in the meantime they are doing a great deal, and they are trying to promote this union, which I regard as of so much importance, in their own way and by their own means.

And first among those means is the offer of preferential tariffs. Now that is a matter which, at the present moment, is of the greatest possible importance to every one of you. It depends upon how we treat this policy of the colonies—not a policy inaugurated by us, but a policy which comes to us from our children abroad—it depends upon how we treat it, whether it is developed in the future, or withdrawn as being unacceptable to those whom it is sought to benefit. The other day, immediately after I left South Africa, a great conference was held for the first time of all the colonies in South Africa—the new colonies as well as the old. The Boers and the Dutch were represented as well as the British ; and this conference recommended the several legislatures of the different colonies to give to us, the mother country, preference upon all dutiable goods of 25 per cent. Last year, at the conference of premiers, the representatives of Australia and New Zealand accepted the same principle. They said that in their different colonies there might be some difference of treatment ; but, so far as the principle was concerned, they pledged themselves to recommend to their constituents a substantial preference in favour of goods produced in the mother country. Now, that, again, is a new chapter in our Imperial history, and again I ask, is it to end there ? In my opinion, these recommendations and these pledges will bear fruit just in proportion as you show your appreciation of them, and they will depend largely upon the experience of Canada, which has been a precursor in a similar movement.

Canada is the greatest, the most prosperous, of our self-governing colonies. At the present time it is in the full swing of an extraordinary prosperity, which I hope and believe will lead to a great increase in its population, its strength, its importance in the constellation of free nations which constitutes the British Empire. Canada is, of all our colonies, the most backward in contributing to common defence, but Canada has been the most forward in endeavouring to unite the Empire by other means—by strengthening our commercial relations, and by giving to us special favour and preference. And if we appreciate this action properly,

it seems to me that not only is it certain that every other colony of the Empire will necessarily and in due time follow this example, but Canada herself and the other colonies, as the bonds are drawn closer, and as we become more and more one people, united by interest as well as by sentiment, will be more and more ready to take their fair share in these burdens of defence to which I have referred. The policy which I wish to make clear to you is not to force our colonies—that is hopeless, for they are as independent as we are—but to meet everything they do. If they see a way of drawing the Empire together, let us help them in that, even if they may not be prepared to join us in some other way from which we think the same result would be achieved. But let us be prepared to accept every indication on their part of this desire. Let us show we appreciate it; and, believe me, it will not be long before all will come into line, and the results which follow will be greater than, perhaps, it would be prudent now to anticipate.

What has Canada done for us? Canada in 1898, freely, voluntarily, of her own accord, as a recognition of her obligations to the mother country, as a recognition especially of the fact that we were the greatest of the free markets open to Canadian produce, gave us a preference on all dutiable goods of 25 per cent. In 1900 she increased that preference, also freely of her own accord, to 33½ per cent.

I have had occasion to point out that the results of this great concession have been, to a certain extent, and in some respects, disappointing. The increase in our trade with Canada has been very great, but it has not increased largely out of proportion to the increase of the trade between Canada and other countries. But this remains true: that whereas, before these concessions, the trade of this country with Canada was constantly getting less and less, that reduction has been stayed, and the trade has continually increased. To put it in a word, the trade between our colony of Canada and the mother country, which was six and a half millions in 1897-98, is now carried on at a rate of £11,000,000—probably a good deal more—but I will, to be safe, say of

£11,000,000 sterling in the present year ; and the increase is chiefly in textile goods—cotton, woollen, and goods of that kind—and in the manufactures of hardware and iron and steel. And, at the same time, whereas the percentage of the total trade had fallen from 40 per cent., I think—or, at all events, from a large percentage—to $23\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., in these last two years it has been gradually climbing up again, and it has now reached for the present year $26\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

That is an important result. But the Ministers of Canada, when they were over here last year, made me a further definite offer. They said : ‘ We have done for you as much as we can do voluntarily and freely and without return. If you are willing to reciprocate in any way, we are prepared to reconsider our tariff with a view of seeing whether we cannot give you further reductions, especially in regard to those goods in which you come into competition with foreigners ; and we will do this if you will meet us by giving us a drawback on the small tax of 1s. per quarter which you have put upon corn.’ That was a definite offer which we have had to refuse. I need not say that, if I could treat matters of this kind solely in regard to my position as Secretary of State for the Colonies, I should have said, ‘ That is a fair offer, that is a generous offer, from your point of view, and it is an offer which we might ask our people to accept.’ But, speaking for the Government as a whole, and not solely in the interests of the colonies, I am obliged to say that it is contrary to the established fiscal policy of this country ; that we hold ourselves bound to keep open market for all the world, even if they close their markets to us ; and that, therefore, so long as that is the mandate of the British public, we are not in a position to offer any preference or favour whatever, even to our own children. We cannot make any difference between those who treat us well and those who treat us badly. Yes, but that is the doctrine which, I am told, is the accepted doctrine of the Free Traders, and we are all Free Traders. I have considerable doubt whether the interpretation of Free Trade which is current amongst a certain limited section is the true interpretation.

I am perfectly certain that I am not a Protectionist ; but I want to point out that, if the interpretation is that our only duty is to buy in the cheapest market without regard to where we can sell—if that is the theory of Free Trade that finds acceptance, then, in pursuance of that policy, you will lose the advantage of the further reduction in duty which your great colony of Canada offers to you, the manufacturers of this country. And you may lose a great deal more ; because in the speech which the Minister of Finance made to the Canadian Parliament the other day he says that if they are told definitely that Great Britain, the mother country, can do nothing for them in the way of reciprocity, they must reconsider their position and reconsider the preference that they have already given.

These are big questions, and this particular question is complicated in a rather unexpected manner. The policy which prevents us from offering an advantage to our colonies prevents us from defending them if they are attacked. Now, I suppose, you and I are agreed that the British Empire is one and indivisible. You and I are agreed that we absolutely refuse to look upon any of the States that form the British Empire as in any way excluded from any advantage or privilege to which the British Empire is entitled. We may well, therefore, have supposed that an agreement of this kind by which Canada does a kindness to us, was a matter of family arrangement, concerning nobody else. But, unfortunately, Germany thinks otherwise. There is a German Empire. The German Empire is divided into States. Bavaria, and, let us say, Hanover, Saxony, and Würtemberg, may deal between themselves any way they please. As a matter of fact, they have entire Free Trade among themselves. We do not consider them separate entities ; we treat the German Empire as a whole, and we do not complain because one State gives an advantage to another State within that Empire, and does not give it to all the rest of the world. But in this case of Canada, Germany insists upon treating Canada as though it were a separate country. It refuses to recognise it as a part of one

Empire, entitled to claim the privileges of that Empire. It regards this agreement as being something more than a domestic agreement, and it has penalised Canada by placing upon Canadian goods an additional duty.

Now the reason for this is clear. The German newspapers very frankly explain that this is a policy of reprisal, and that it is intended to deter other colonies from giving to us the same advantage. Therefore, it is not merely punishment inflicted by Germany upon Canada, but it is a threat to South Africa, to Australia, and to New Zealand. This policy, a policy of dictation and interference, is justified by the belief that we are so wedded to our fiscal system that we cannot interfere, and that we cannot defend our colonies, and that, in fact, any one of them that attempts to establish any kind of special relations with us does so at its own risk, and must be left to bear the brunt of foreign hostility. To my mind, that is putting us in a rather humiliating position. I do not like it at all. I know what will follow if we allow it to prevail; it is easy to predict the consequences. How do you think that, under such circumstances, we can approach our colonies with appeals to aid us in promoting the union of the Empire, or ask them to bear a share of the common burdens? Are we to say to them, 'This is your Empire, take pride in it, share its privileges?' They will say, 'What are its privileges? The privileges appear to be that if we treat you as relations and friends, if we show you kindness, if we give you preference, you, who benefit by our action, can only leave us alone to fight our own battles against those who are offended by our action.' Now, is that Free Trade? I am not going further to-night. My object is to put the position before you, and, above all, as I have just come home from great colonies, I want you to see these matters as they appear to our colonial fellow-subjects. There is no doubt what they think, and there is no doubt what great issues hang upon their decision. I asked just now, 'Is this Free Trade?' No; it is absolutely a new situation; there has been nothing like it in our history. It is a situation that was never contemplated by any of

those whom we regard as the authors of Free Trade. What would Mr. Bright, what would Mr. Cobden, have said to this state of things ? I do not know, and it would be presumptuous to imagine. But this I can say, that Mr. Cobden did not hesitate to make a treaty of reciprocity with France and Mr. Bright did not hesitate to approve of his action ; and I cannot believe, if they had been present among us now and had known what this new situation was, that they would have hesitated to make a treaty of preference and reciprocity with our own children.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, you see the point. You want an empire. Do you think it better to cultivate the trade with your own people, or to let that go in order that you may keep the trade of those who are your competitors and rivals ? I say it is a new position. I say the people of this Empire have got to consider it. I do not want to hasten their decision. They have two alternatives before them. They may maintain, if they like, in all its severity, the interpretation—in my mind an entirely artificial and wrong interpretation—which has been placed upon the doctrines of Free Trade by a small remnant of Little Englanders of the Manchester School, who now profess to be the sole repositories of the doctrines of Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright. They may maintain that policy in all its severity, although it is repudiated by every other nation, and by all your own colonies. In that case, they will be absolutely precluded, either from giving any kind of preference or favour to any of their colonies abroad, or even from protecting their colonies abroad when they offer to favour us. That is the first alternative. The second alternative is that we should insist that we will not be bound by any purely technical definition of Free Trade ; that while we seek as our chief object free interchange of trade and commerce between ourselves and all the nations of the world, we will nevertheless recover our freedom ; resume the power of negotiation, and, if necessary, retaliation whenever our own interests or our relations between our colonies and ourselves are threatened by other people.

I leave the matter in your hands. I desire that a discussion on this subject should be opened. The time has not yet come to settle it; but it seems to me that, for good or for evil, it is an issue much greater in its consequences than any of our local disputes. Make a mistake in legislation—it can be corrected. Make a mistake in your Imperial policy—it is irretrievable. You have an opportunity; you will never have it again. And, for my own part, I believe in a British Empire, in an Empire which, although it should be one of its first duties to cultivate friendship with all the nations of the world, should yet, even if alone, be self-sustaining and self-sufficient, able to maintain itself against the competition of all its rivals. And I do not believe in a Little England which shall be separated from all those to whom it should in the natural course look for support and affection—a Little England which shall thus be dependent absolutely on the mercy of those who envy its present prosperity; and who have shown they are ready to do all in their power to prevent the future union of the British race throughout the world.

THE CASE FOR TARIFF REFORM

ST. ANDREW'S HALL, GLASGOW, OCTOBER 6, 1903

I AM in a great city, the second of the Empire; the city which by the enterprise and intelligence which it has always shown is entitled to claim something of a representative character in respect of British industry. I am in that city in which Free Trade took its birth, in that city in which Adam Smith taught so long, and where he was one of my most distinguished predecessors in the great office of Lord Rector of your University, which it will always be to me a great honour to have filled. Adam Smith was a great man. It was not given to him, it never has been given to mortals, to foresee all the changes that may occur in something like a century and a half; but with a broad and far-seeing in-

telligence which is not common among men, Adam Smith did at any rate anticipate many of our modern conditions; and when I read his books I see how even then he was aware of the importance of home markets as compared with foreign; how he advocated retaliation under certain conditions; how he supported the Navigation Laws; how he was the author of a sentence which we ought never to forget, that 'Defence is greater than opulence.' When I remember, also, how he, entirely before his time, pressed for reciprocal trade between our colonies and the mother country, I say he had a broader mind, a more Imperial conception of the duties of the citizens of a great Empire, than some of those who have taught also as professors and who claim to be his successors. Ladies and gentlemen, I am not afraid to come here to the home of Adam Smith and to combat free imports, and still less am I afraid to preach to you preference with our colonies—to you in this great city whose whole prosperity has been founded upon its colonial relations. But I must not think only of the city, I must think of the country. It is known to every man that Scotland has contributed out of all proportion to its population to build up the great Empire of which we are all so proud—an Empire which took genius and capacity and courage to create, and which requires now genius and capacity and courage to maintain.

I do not regard this as a party meeting. I am no longer a party leader. I am an outsider, and it is not my intention—I do not think it would be right—to raise any exclusively party issues. But after what has occurred in the last few days, after the meeting at Sheffield,¹ a word or two may be forgiven to me, who, although no longer a leader, am still a loyal servant of the party to which I belong.

I say to you, ladies and gentlemen, that that party whose continued existence, whose union, whose strength I still believe to be essential to the welfare of the country and to the welfare of the Empire, has found a leader whom every

¹ At which Mr. Balfour had declared himself in favour of the principle of Tariff Reform.

member may be proud to follow. Mr. Balfour in his position has responsibilities which he cannot share with us, but no one will contest his right—a right to which his high office, his ability, and his character alike entitle him—to declare the official policy of the party which he leads, to fix its limits; to settle the time at which application shall be given to the principles which he has put forward. For myself, I agree with the principles that he has stated. I approve of the policy to which he proposes to give effect, and I admire the courage and the resource with which he faces difficulties which, even in our varied political history, have hardly ever been surpassed. It ought not to be necessary to say any more. But it seems as though in this country there have always been men who do not know what loyalty and friendship mean, and to them I say that nothing that they can do will have the slightest influence or will affect in the slightest degree the friendship and confidence which exist and have existed for so many years between the Prime Minister and myself. Let them do their worst. Understand that in no conceivable circumstances will I allow myself to be put in any sort of competition, direct or indirect, with my friend and leader, whom I mean to follow. What is my position? I have invited a discussion upon a question which comes peculiarly within my province, owing to the office which I have so recently held. I have invited discussion upon it. I have not pretended that a matter of this importance is to be settled off-hand. I have been well aware that the country has to be educated, as I myself have had to be educated before I saw, or could see, all the bearings of this great matter; and therefore I take up the position of a pioneer. I go in front of the army, and if the army is attacked, I go back to it.

Meanwhile, putting aside all these personal and party questions, I ask my countrymen, without regard to any political opinions which they may have hitherto held, to consider the greatest of all great questions that can be put before the country, to consider it impartially if possible, and to come to a decision; and it is possible—I am always

an optimist—it is possible that the nation may be prepared to go a little further than the official programme. I have known them to do it before, and no harm has come to the party; no harm that I know has come to those who as scouts, or pioneers, or investigators, or discoverers have gone a little before it. Well, one of my objects in coming here is to find an answer to this question. Is the country prepared to go a little further?

What are our objects? They are two. In the first place, we all desire the maintenance and increase of the national strength and the prosperity of the United Kingdom. That may be a selfish desire; but in my mind it carries with it something more than mere selfishness. You cannot expect foreigners to take the same views as we of our position and duty. To my mind Britain has played a great part in the past in the history of the world, and for that reason I wish Britain to continue. Then, in the second place, our object is, or should be, the realisation of the greatest ideal which has ever inspired statesmen in any country or in any age—the creation of an Empire such as the world has never seen. We have to cement the union of the states beyond the seas; we have to consolidate the British race; we have to meet the clash of competition, commercial now—sometimes in the past it has been otherwise—it may be again in the future. Whatever it be, whatever danger threatens, we have to meet it no longer as an isolated country; we have to meet it fortified and strengthened, and buttressed by all those of our kinsmen, all those powerful and continually rising states which speak our common tongue and glory in our common flag.

Those are two great objects, and, as I have said, we all should have them in view. How are we to attain them? In the first place, let me say one word as to the method in which this discussion is to be carried on. Surely it should be treated in a manner worthy of its magnitude, worthy of the dignity of the theme. For my part I disclaim any imputation of evil motive and unworthy motive on the part of those who may happen to disagree with me; and I claim

equal consideration from them. I claim that this matter should be treated on its merits—without personal feeling, personal bitterness, and, if possible, without entering upon questions of purely party controversy, and I do that for the reason I have given ; but also because, if you are to make a change in a system which has existed for nearly sixty years, which affects more or less every man, woman, and child in the kingdom, you can only make that change successfully if you have behind you not merely a party support—if you do not attempt to force it by a small majority on a large and unwilling minority, but if it becomes, as I believe it will become, a national policy in consonance with the feelings, the aspirations, and the interests of the overwhelming proportion of the country.

I was speaking just now of the characteristics of Glasgow as a great city ; I am not certain whether I mentioned that I believe it is one of the most prosperous of cities, that it has had a great and continuous prosperity ; and if that be so, here, more than anywhere else, I have to answer the question, Why cannot you let well alone ? Well, I have been in Venice—the beautiful city of the Adriatic—which had at one time a commercial supremacy quite as great in proportion as anything we have ever enjoyed. Its glories have departed ; but what I was going to say was that when I was there last I saw the great tower of the Campanile rising above the city which it had overshadowed for centuries, and looking as though it was as permanent as the city itself. And yet the other day, in a few minutes, the whole structure fell to the ground. Nothing was left of it but a mass of ruin and rubbish. I do not say to you, gentlemen, that I anticipate any catastrophe so great or so sudden for British trade ; but I do say to you that I see signs of decay ; that I see cracks and crevices in the walls of the great structure ; that I know that the foundations upon which it has been raised are not broad enough or deep enough to sustain it. Now, do I do wrong, if I know this—if I even think I know it—do I do wrong to warn you ? Is it not a most strange and inconsistent thing that while certain people are indicting

the Government in language which, to say the least of it, is extravagant, for not having been prepared for the great war from which we have recently emerged with success—is it not strange that these same people should be denouncing me in language equally extravagant because I want to prepare you now, while there is time, for a struggle greater in its consequences than that to which I have referred—a struggle from which, if we emerge defeated, this country will lose its place, will no longer count among the great nations of the world—a struggle which we are asked to meet with antiquated weapons and with old-fashioned tactics ?

I tell you that it is not well to-day with British industry. We have been going through a period of great expansion. The whole world has been prosperous. I see signs of a change, but let that pass. When the change comes, I think even the Free Fooders will be converted. But meanwhile, what are the facts ? The year 1900 was the record year of British trade. The exports were the largest we had ever known. The year 1902—last year—was nearly as good, and yet, if you will compare your trade in 1872, thirty years ago, with the trade of 1902—the export trade—you will find that there has been a moderate increase of £22,000,000.¹ That, I think, is something like $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Meanwhile, the population has increased 30 per cent. Can you go on supporting your population at that rate of increase, when even in the best of years you can only show so much smaller an increase in your foreign trade ? The actual increase was £22,000,000 under our Free Trade. In the same time the increase in the United States of America was £110,000,000, and the increase in Germany was £56,000,000. In the United Kingdom our export trade has been practically stagnant for thirty years. It went down in the interval. It has now gone up in the most prosperous times. In the most prosperous times it is hardly better than it was thirty years ago.

¹ The figures given in the then recent Board of Trade Blue Book are as follows : Total exports of British produce—1872, £256,000,000 ; 1902, £278,000,000.

Meanwhile the protected countries which you have been told, and which I myself at one time believed, were going rapidly to wreck and ruin, have progressed in a much greater proportion than ours. That is not all; not merely the amount of your trade remained stagnant, but the character of your trade has changed. When Mr. Cobden preached his doctrine, he believed, as he had at that time considerable reason to suppose, that while foreign countries would supply us with our food-stuffs and raw materials, we should remain the mart of the world, and should send them in exchange our manufactures. But that is exactly what we have not done. On the contrary, in the period to which I have referred, we are sending less and less of our manufactures to them, and they are sending more and more of their manufactures to us.

I know how difficult it is for a great meeting like this to follow figures. I shall give you as few as I can, but I must give you some to lay the basis of my argument. I have had a table constructed, and upon that table I would be willing to base the whole of my contention. I will take some figures from it. You have to analyse your trade. It is not merely a question of amount; you have to consider of what it is composed. Now what has been the case with regard to our manufactures? Our existence as a nation depends upon our manufacturing capacity and production. We are not essentially or mainly an agricultural country. That can never be the main source of our prosperity. We are a great manufacturing country. In 1872, we sent to the protected countries of Europe and to the United States of America, £116,000,000 of exported manufactures. In 1882, ten years later, it fell to £88,000,000. In 1892, ten years later, it fell to £75,000,000. In 1902, last year, although the general exports had increased, the exports of manufactures to these countries had decreased again to £73,500,000, and the total result of this is that, after thirty years, you are sending £42,500,000 of manufactures less to the great protected countries than you did thirty years ago. Then there are the neutral countries, that is, the countries which, although

they may have tariffs, have no manufactures, and therefore the tariffs are not protective—such countries as Egypt and China, and South America, and similar places. Our exports of manufactures have not fallen in these markets to any considerable extent. They have practically remained the same, but on the whole they have fallen £3,500,000. Adding that to the loss in the protected countries, and you have lost altogether in your exports of manufactures £46,000,000.

How is it that that has not impressed the people before now? Because the change has been concealed by our statistics. I do not say they have not shown it, because you could have picked it out, but they are not put in a form which is understood of the people. You have failed to observe that the maintenance of your trade is dependent entirely on British possessions. While to these foreign countries your export of manufactures has declined by £46,000,000, to your British possessions it has increased £40,000,000, and at the present time your trade with the colonies and British possessions is larger in amount, very much larger in amount, and very much more valuable in the categories I have named, than our trade with the whole of Europe and the United States of America. It is much larger than our trade to those neutral countries of which I have spoken, and it remains at the present day the most rapidly increasing, the most important, the most valuable of the whole of our trade. One more comparison. During this period of thirty years in which our exports of manufactures have fallen £46,000,000 to foreign countries, what has happened as regards their exports of manufactures to us? They have risen from £63,000,000 in 1872 to £149,000,000 in 1902. They have increased £86,000,000. That may be all right. I am not for the moment saying whether that is right or wrong, but when people say that we ought to hold exactly the same opinion about things that our ancestors did, my reply is that I dare say we should do so if circumstances had remained the same.

But now, if I have been able to make these figures clear, there is one thing which follows—that is, that our Imperial

trade is absolutely essential to our prosperity at the present time. If that trade declines, or if it does not increase in proportion to our population and to the loss of trade with foreign countries, then we sink at once into a fifth-rate nation. Our fate will be the fate of the empires and kingdoms of the past. We shall have reached our highest point, and indeed I am not certain that there are not some of my opponents who regard that with absolute complacency. I do not. As I have said, I have the misfortune to be an optimist. I do not believe in the setting of the British star, but then, I do not believe in the folly of the British people. I trust them. I trust the working classes of this country, and I have confidence that they who are our masters, electorally speaking, will have the intelligence to see that they must wake up. They must modify their policy to suit new conditions. They must meet those conditions with altogether a new policy.

I have said that if our Imperial trade declines we decline. My second point is this. It will decline inevitably unless while there is still time we take the necessary steps to preserve it. Have you ever considered why it is that Canada takes so much more of the products of British manufacturers than the United States of America does per head? Why does Australia take about three times as much per head as Canada? And why does South Africa—the white population of South Africa—take more per head than Australasia? When you have got to the bottom of that—and it is not difficult—you will see the whole argument. These countries are all protective countries. I see that the Labour leaders, or some of them, in this country are saying that the interest of the working class is to maintain our present system of free imports. The moment those men go to the colonies they change. I will undertake to say that no one of them has ever been there for six months without singing a different tune. The vast majority of the working men in all the colonies are Protectionists, and I am not inclined to accept the easy explanation that they are all fools. I do not understand why an intelligent man—a man who is intelligent in

this country—becomes an idiot when he goes to Australasia. But I will tell you what he does do. He gets rid of a good number of old-world prejudices and superstitions. I say they are Protectionist, all these countries. Now, what is the history of Protection? In the first place, a tariff is imposed. There are no industries, or practically none, but only a tariff; then gradually industries grow up behind the tariff wall. In the first place, they are primary industries, the industries for which the country has natural aptitude or for which it has some special advantage—mineral or other resources. Then when those are established the secondary industries spring up, first the necessities, then the luxuries, until at last all the ground is covered. These countries of which I have been speaking to you are in different stages of the protective process. In America the process has been completed. She produces everything; she excludes everything. There is no trade to be done with her beyond a paltry 6s. per head. Canada has been protective for a long time. The protective policy has produced its natural result. The principal industries are there, and you can never get rid of them. They will be there for ever, but up to the present time the secondary industries have not been created, and there is an immense deal of trade that is still open to you, that you may still retain, that you may increase. In Australasia the industrial position is still less advanced. The agricultural products of the country have been first of all developed. Accordingly, Australasia takes more from you per head than Canada. In South Africa there are, practically speaking, no industries at all. Now, I ask you to suppose that we intervene in any stage of the process. We can do it now. We might have done it with greater effect ten years ago. Whether we can do it with any effect or at all twenty years hence I am very doubtful. We can intervene now. We can say to our great colonies: 'We understand your views and conditions. We do not attempt to dictate to you. We do not think ourselves superior to you. We have taken the trouble to learn your objections, to appreciate and sympathise with your policy. We know

that you are right in saying you will not always be content to be what the Americans call a one-horse country, with a single industry and no diversity of employment. We can see that you are right not to neglect what Providence has given you in the shape of mineral or other resources. We understand and we appreciate the wisdom of your statesmen when they say they will not allow their country to be solely dependent on foreign supplies for the necessities of life. We understand all that, and therefore we will not propose to you anything that is unreasonable or contrary to this policy, which we know is deep in your hearts ; but we will say to you, " After all, there are many things which you do not now make, many things for which we have a great capacity of production—leave them to us as you have left them hitherto. Do not increase your tariff walls against us. Pull them down where they are unnecessary to the success of this policy to which you are committed. Do that because we are kinsmen—without injury to any important interest—because it is good for the Empire as a whole, and because we have taken the first step and have set you the example. We offer you a preference ; we rely on your patriotism, your affection, that we shall not be losers thereby." "

Now, suppose that we had made an offer of that kind—I won't say to the colonies, but to Germany, to the United States of America—ten or twenty years ago. Do you suppose that we should not have been able to retain a great deal of what we have now lost and cannot recover ?

I will give you an illustration. America is the strictest of protective nations. It is so immoderate, so unreasonable, so unnecessary, that, though America has profited enormously under it, yet I think it has been carried to excessive lengths, and I believe now that a great number of intelligent Americans would gladly negotiate with us for its reduction. But until very recent times even this immoderate tariff left to us a great trade. It left to us the tin-plate trade, and the American tin-plate trade amounted to millions per annum, and gave employment to thousands of British work-people. If we had gone to America ten or twenty years ago

and had said, 'If you will leave the tin-plate trade as it is, put no duty on tin-plate—you have never had to complain either of our quality or our price—we in return will give you some advantage on some articles which you produce,' we might have kept the tin-plate trade. It would not have been worth America's while to put a duty on an article for which it had no particular or special aptitude or capacity. If we had gone to Germany in the same sense, there are hundreds of articles which are now made in Germany which are sent to this country, which are taking the place of goods employing British labour, which they might have left to us in return for our concessions to them.

We did not take that course. We were not prepared for it as a people. We allowed matters to drift. Are we going to let them drift now? Are we going to lose the colonial trade? This is the parting of the ways. You have to remember that if you do not take this opportunity it will not recur. If you do not take it I predict, and I predict with certainty, that Canada will fall to the level of the United States, that Australia will fall to the level of Canada, that South Africa will fall to the level of Australia, and that will only be the beginning of the general decline which will deprive you of your most important customers, of your most rapidly increasing trade. I think that I have some reason to speak with authority on this subject. The colonies are prepared to meet us. In return for a very moderate preference they will give us a substantial advantage. They will give us in the first place, I believe they will reserve to us, much at any rate of the trade which we already enjoy. They will not—and I would not urge them for a moment to do so—they will not injure those of their industries which have already been created. They will maintain them, they will not allow them to be destroyed or injured even by our competition, but outside that there is still a great margin, a margin which has given us this enormous increase of trade to which I have referred. That margin I believe we can permanently retain, and I ask you to think, if that is of so much importance to us now,

when we have only eleven millions of white fellow-citizens in these distant colonies, what will it be when, in the course of a period which is a mere moment of time in the history of states, that population is forty millions or more? Is it not worth while to consider whether the actual trade which you may retain, whether the enormous potential trade which you and your descendants may enjoy, be not worth a sacrifice, if sacrifice be required? But they will do a great deal more for you. This is certain. Not only will they enable you to retain the trade which you have, but they are ready to give you preference on all the trade which is now done with them by foreign competitors. I never see any appreciation by the free importers of the magnitude of this trade. It will increase. It has increased greatly in thirty years, and if it goes on with equally rapid strides we shall be ousted by foreign competition, if not by protective tariffs, from our colonies. It amounts at the present time to £47,000,000. But it is said that a great part of that £47,000,000 is in goods which we cannot supply. That is true, and with regard to that portion of the trade we have no interest in any preferential tariff, but it has been calculated, and I believe it to be accurate, that £26,000,000 a year of that trade might come to this country which now goes to Germany and France and other foreign countries, if reasonable preference were given to British manufactures. What does that mean? The Board of Trade assumes that of manufactured goods one-half the value is expended in labour—I think it is a great deal more, but take the Board of Trade figures—£13,000,000 a year of new employment. What does that mean to the United Kingdom? It means the employment of 166,000 men at 30s. a week. It means the subsistence, if you include their families, of 830,000 persons; and now, if you will only add to that our present export to the British possessions of £96,000,000, you will find that that gives, on the same calculation, £48,000,000 for wages, or employment at 30s. a week to 615,000 work-people, and it finds subsistence for 3,075,000 persons. In other words, your colonial trade as it stands at present

with the prospective advantage of a preference against the foreigner means employment and fair wages for three-quarters of a million of workmen, and subsistence for nearly four millions of our population.

Ladies and gentlemen, I feel deeply sensible that the argument I have addressed to you is one of those which will be described by the leader of the Opposition as a squalid argument. A squalid argument! I have appealed to your interests, I have come here as a man of business, I have appealed to the employers and the employed alike in this great city. I have endeavoured to point out to them that their trade, their wages, all depend on the maintenance of this colonial trade, of which some of my opponents speak with such contempt, and, above all, with such egregious ignorance. But now I abandon that line of argument for the moment, and appeal to something higher, which I believe is in your hearts as it is in mine. I appeal to you as fellow-citizens of the greatest Empire that the world has ever known; I appeal to you to recognise that the privileges of Empire bring with them great responsibilities. I want to ask you to think what this Empire means, what it is to you and your descendants: I will not speak, or, at least, I will not dwell, on its area, greater than that which has been under one dominion in the history of the world. I will not speak of its population, of the hundreds of millions of men for whom we have made ourselves responsible. But I will speak of its variety, and of the fact that here we have an Empire which with decent organisation and consolidation might be absolutely self-sustaining. Nothing of the kind has ever been known before. There is no article of your food, there is no raw material of your trade, there is no necessity of your lives, no luxury of your existence which cannot be produced somewhere or other in the British Empire, if the British Empire holds together, and if we who have inherited it are worthy of our opportunities.

There is another product of the British Empire, that is, men. You have not forgotten the advantage, the encouragement, which can be given by the existence of loyal men,

inhabitants, indeed, of distant states, but still loyal to the common flag. It is not so long since these men, when the old country was in straits, rushed to her assistance. No persuasion was necessary; it was a voluntary movement. That was not a squalid assistance. They had no special interest. They were interested, indeed, as sons of the Empire. If they had been separate states they would have had no interest at all. They came to our assistance and proved themselves indeed men of the old stock; they proved themselves worthy of the best traditions of the British army, and gave us an assistance, a material assistance, which was invaluable. They gave us moral support which was even more grateful. That is the result of Empire. I should be wrong if, in referring to our white fellow-subjects, I did not also say, that in addition to them, if any straits befell us, there are millions and hundreds of millions of men born in tropical climes, and of races very different from ours, who, although they were prevented by political considerations from taking part in our recent struggle, would be in any death-throe of the Empire equally eager to show their loyalty and their devotion. Now, is such a dominion, are such traditions, is such a glorious inheritance, is such a splendid sentiment—are they worth preserving? They have cost us much. They have cost much in blood and treasure; and in past times, as in recent, many of our best and noblest have given their lives, or risked their lives, for this great ideal. But it has also done much for us. It has ennobled our national life, it has discouraged that petty parochialism which is the defect of all small communities. I say to you that all that is best in our present life, best in this Britain of ours, all of which we have the right to be most proud, is due to the fact that we are not only sons of Britain, but we are sons of Empire. I do not think, I am not likely to do you the injustice to believe, that you would make this sacrifice fruitless, that you would make all this endeavour vain. But if you want to complete it, remember that each generation in turn has to do its part, and you are called to take your share in this great work. Others have founded

the Empire ; it is yours to build firmly and permanently the great edifice of which others have laid the foundation. And I believe we have got to change somewhat our rather insular habits. When I have been in the colonies I have told them that they are too provincial, but I think we are too provincial also. We think too much of ourselves, and we forget—and it is necessary we should remember—that we are only part of a larger whole. And when I speak of our colonies it is an expression ; they are not ours—in the sense that we possess them. They are sister states, able to treat with us from an equal position, able to hold to us, willing to hold to us, but also able to break with us. I have had eight years' experience. I have been in communication with many of the men, statesmen, orators, writers, distinguished in our colonies. I have had intimate conversation with them. I have tried to understand them, and I think I do understand them, and I say that none of them desire separation. There are none of them who are not loyal to this idea of Empire which they say they wish us to accept more fully in the future, but I have found none who do not believe that our present colonial relations cannot be permanent. We must either draw closer together or we shall drift apart.

When I made that statement with all responsibility some time ago there were people, political opponents, who said : 'See, here is the result of having a Colonial Secretary. Eight years ago the colonies were devoted to the mother country. Everything was for the best. Preferences were not thought of. There were no squalid bonds. The colonies were ready to do everything for us. They were not such fools as to think we should do anything for them, but while things were in this happy state the Colonial Secretary came into office. Now it has all disappeared. We are told if we do not alter our policy we may lose our Empire.' It is a fancy picture, but I will not rest my case upon my own opinion. It is not I who have said this alone ; others have said it before me. We have a statesman here in Scotland whose instincts are always right. What did he say many years before I came into office, in 1888 ? Lord Rosebery was

speaking at Leeds, and he said this : ' The people in this country will in a not too distant time have to make up their minds what position they wish their colonies to occupy with respect to them, or whether they desire their colonies to leave them altogether. It is, as I believe, absolutely impossible for you to maintain in the long run your present loose and indefinable relations and preserve these colonies as parts of the Empire. . . . I do not see that you can obtain the great boon of a peaceful Empire encircling the globe with a bond of commercial unity and peace without some sacrifice on your part.' Well, we have to consider, of course, what is the sacrifice we are called upon to make. I do not believe—no, let me first say if there be a sacrifice, if that can be shown, I will go confidently to my countrymen, I will tell them what it is, and I will ask them to make it. Nowadays a great deal too much attention is paid to what is called the sacrifice ; no attention is given to what is the gain. But, although I would not hesitate to ask you for a sacrifice if a sacrifice were needed to keep together the Empire to which I attach so much importance, I do not believe that there would be any sacrifice at all. This is an arrangement between friends. This is a negotiation between kinsmen. Can you not conceive the possibility that both sides may gain and neither lose ? Twelve years ago another great man—Mr. Cecil Rhodes—with one of those flashes of insight and genius which made him greater than ordinary men, took advantage of his position as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony to write letters, which have recently been published, to the Prime Minister of Canada and the Prime Minister of New South Wales, of that day. He said in one of these letters : ' The whole thing lies in the question—Can we invent some tie with our mother country that will prevent separation ? It must be a practical one. The curse is that English politicians cannot see the future.'

Well, I ask the same question. Can we invent a tie which must be a practical one, which will prevent separation, and I make the same answer as Mr. Rhodes, who suggested reciprocal preference, and I say that it is only by commercial

union, reciprocal preference, that you can lay the foundations of the confederation of the Empire to which we all look forward as a brilliant possibility. Now I have told you what you are to gain by preference. You will gain the retention and the increase of your customers. You will gain work for the enormous number of those who are now unemployed; you will pave the way for a firmer and more enduring union of the Empire. What will it cost you? What do the colonies ask? They ask a preference on their particular products. You cannot give them, at least it would be futile to offer them, a preference on manufactured goods, because at the present time the exported manufacture of the colonies is entirely insignificant. You cannot, in my opinion, give them a preference on raw material. It has been said that I should propose such a tax; but I repeat now, in the most explicit terms, that I do not propose a tax on raw materials, which are a necessity of our manufacturing trade. What remains? Food.

Therefore, if you wish to have preference, if you desire to gain this increase, if you wish to prevent separation, you must put a tax on food. The murder is out. I said that in the House of Commons, but I said a good deal more, but that is the only thing of all that I said that my opponents have thought it particularly interesting to quote, and you see that on every wall, in the headlines of the leaflets of the Cobden Club, in the speeches of the devotees of free imports, in the arguments of those who dread the responsibilities of Empire, but do not seem to care much about the possibility of its dissolution—all these, then, put in the forefront that Mr. Chamberlain says, 'You must tax food.' I was going to say that this statement which they quote is true. But it is only half the truth, and they never give you the other half. You never see attached to this statement that you must tax food the other words that I have used in reference to this subject, that nothing that I propose would add one farthing to the cost of living to the working man, or to any family in this country. How is that to be achieved? I have been asked for a plan.

I have hesitated, because, as you will readily see, no final plan can be proposed until a Government is authorised by the people to enter into negotiations upon these principles. Until that Government has had the opportunity of negotiating with the colonies, with foreign countries, and with the heads and experts in all our great industries, any plan must be at the present time more or less of a sketch plan.

But at the same time I recognise that you have a right to call upon me for the broad outlines of my plan, and those I will give you if you will bear with me. You have heard it said that I propose to put a duty of 5s. or 10s. a quarter on wheat. That is untrue. I propose to put a low duty on foreign corn, no duty at all on the corn coming from our British possessions. But I propose to put a low duty on foreign corn not exceeding 2s. a quarter. I propose to put no tax whatever on maize, partly because maize is a food of some of the very poorest of the population, and partly also because it is a raw material for the farmers, who feed their stock with it. I propose that the corresponding tax which will have to be put on flour should give a substantial preference to the miller, and I do that in order to re-establish one of our most ancient industries in this country, believing that if that is done not only will more work be found in agricultural districts, with some tendency, perhaps, operating against the constant migration from the country into the towns, but also because by re-establishing the milling industry in this country, the offals, as they are called—the refuse of the wheat—will remain in the country and will give to the farmers or the agricultural population a food for their stock and their pigs at very much lower rates. That will benefit not merely the great farmer, but it will benefit the little man, the small owner of a plot or even the allotment owner who keeps a single pig. I am told by a high agricultural authority that if this were done so great an effect would be produced upon the price of the food of the animal that where an agricultural labourer keeps one pig now he might keep two in the future. I propose to put a small tax of about 5 per cent. on foreign meat and dairy

produce. I propose to exclude bacon, because once more bacon is a popular food with some of the poorest of the population. And, lastly, I propose to give a substantial preference to our colonies upon colonial wines and perhaps upon colonial fruits. Well, those are the taxes, new taxes, or alterations of taxation which I propose as additions to your present burden.

But I propose also some great remissions. I propose to take off three-fourths of the duty on tea and half of the whole duty on sugar, with a corresponding reduction on cocoa and coffee. Now, what will be the result of these changes: in the first place upon the cost of living; in the second place upon the Treasury? As regards the cost of living, I have accepted, for the purpose of argument, the figures of the Board of Trade as to the consumption of an ordinary workman's family, both in the country districts and in the towns, and I find that if he pays the whole of the new duties that I propose to impose it would cost an agricultural labourer $16\frac{1}{2}$ farthings per week more than at present, and the artisan in the town $19\frac{1}{2}$ farthings per week. In other words, it would add about 4d. per week to the expenditure of the agricultural labourer and 5d. per week on the expenditure of the artisan. But, then, the reduction which I propose, again taking the consumption as it is declared by the Board of Trade, the reduction would be—in the case of the agricultural labourer 17 farthings a week; in the case of the artisan $19\frac{1}{2}$ farthings a week.

Now, gentlemen, you will see, if you have followed me, that upon the assumption that you pay the whole of the new taxes yourselves, the agricultural labourer would be half a farthing per week to the better, and the artisan would be exactly in the same position as at present. I have made this assumption, but I do not believe in it. I do not believe that these small taxes upon food would be paid to any large extent by the consumers in this country. I believe, on the contrary, they would be paid by the foreigner.

Now, that doctrine can be supported by authoritative

evidence. In the first place, look at the economists—I am not speaking of the fourteen professors¹—but take John Stuart Mill, take the late Professor Sidgwick, and I could quote others now living. They all agree that of any tax upon imports, especially if the tax be moderate, a portion, at any rate, is paid by the foreigner, and that is confirmed by experience. I have gone carefully during the last few weeks into the statistical tables not only of the United Kingdom, but of other countries, and I find that neither in Germany, nor in France, nor in Italy, nor in Sweden, nor in the United Kingdom, when there has been the imposition of a new duty or an increase of an old duty, has the whole cost over a fair average of years ever fallen upon the consumer. It has always been partly paid by the foreigner. Well, how much is paid by the foreigner? That, of course, must be a matter of speculation, and, there again, I have gone to one of the highest authorities of this country—one of the highest of the official experts whom the Government consult—and I have asked him for his opinion, and in his opinion the incidence of a tax depends upon the proportion between the free production and the taxed production. In this case the free production is the home production and the production of the British colonies. The taxed production is the production of the foreigner, and this gentleman is of opinion that if, for instance, the foreigner supplies, as he does in the case of meat, two-ninths of the consumption, the consumer only pays two-ninths of the tax. If, he supplies, as he does in the case of corn, something like three-fourths of the consumption, then the consumer pays three-fourths of the tax. If, as in dairy produce, he supplies half of the consumption, then the consumer pays half of the tax. Well, as I say, that is a theory that will be contested, but I believe it to be accurate, and at all events, as a matter of curiosity, I have worked out this question of the cost of living upon that assumption, and I find that, if you take that proportion, then the cost of the new duties would be $9\frac{1}{2}$ farthings to the agricultural

¹ Who had published a joint remonstrance against any Tariff Reform.

labourer and 10 farthings to the artisan, while the reduction would still be 17 farthings to the labourer and $19\frac{1}{2}$ farthings to the artisan. There, gentlemen, you see my point. If I give my opponents the utmost advantage, if I say to them what I do not believe, if I grant that the whole tax is paid by the consumer, even in that case my proposal would give as large a remission of taxation on the necessary articles of his life as it imposes. As a result of the advantage upon other necessary articles, the budget at the end of the week or the result at the end of the year will be practically the same even if he pays the whole duty. But if he does not pay the whole duty, then he will get all the advantages to which I have already referred. In the case of the agricultural labourer he will gain about 2d. a week, and in the case of the town artisan he will gain $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. a week.

I feel how difficult it is to make either interesting or intelligible to a great audience like this the complicated subject with which I have to deal. But this is my opening declaration, and I feel that I ought to leave nothing untold; at all events, to lay the whole of the outlines of my scheme before the country.

Now, the next point, the last point I have to bring before you, is that these advantages to the consumer will involve a loss to the Exchequer. And you will see why. The Exchequer when it reduces tea or sugar loses the amount of the tax on the whole consumption, but when it imposes a tax on corn or upon meat it only gains the duty on a part of the consumption, since it does not collect it either upon the colonial or upon the home production. Well, I have had that worked out for me, also by an expert, and I find, even making allowance for growth in the colonial and home production which would be likely to be the result of the stimulus which we give to them—and after making allowances for those articles which I do not propose to tax—the loss to the Exchequer will be £2,800,000 per annum. How is it to be made up? I propose to find it, and to find more, in the other branch of this policy of fiscal reform, in that part of it which is sometimes called ‘retaliation’

and sometimes 'reciprocity.' Now I cannot deal fully with that subject to-night. I shall have other opportunities, but this I will point out to you, that in attempting to secure reciprocity we cannot hope to be wholly successful. Nobody, I imagine, is sanguine enough to believe that America or Germany and France and Italy and all those countries are going to drop the whole of their protective scheme because we ask them to do so, or even because we threaten. What I do hope is that they will reduce their duties so that worse things may not happen to them. But I think we shall also have to raise ours. Now a moderate duty on all manufactured goods, not exceeding 10 per cent. on the average, but varying according to the amount of labour in these goods—that is to say, putting the higher rate on the finished manufactures upon which most labour would be employed—a duty, I say, averaging 10 per cent. would give the Exchequer, at the very least, £9,000,000 a year, while it might be nearer £15,000,000 if we accept the Board of Trade estimates of £148,000,000 as the value of our imports of manufactured and partly manufactured goods. Nine millions a year—well, I have an idea that the present Chancellor of the Exchequer would know what to do with a full purse. For myself, if I were in that onerous position—which may Heaven forbid—I should use it in the first place to make up this deficit of £2,800,000 of which I have spoken ; and, in the second place, I should use it for the further reduction both of taxes on food and also of some other taxes which press most hardly on different classes of the community. Remember this, a new tax cannot be lost if it comes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He cannot bury it in a stocking. He must do something with it, and the best thing he can do with it is to remit our taxation. The principle of all this policy is that whereas your present taxation, whether it be on food or anything else, brings you revenue and nothing but revenue, the taxation which I propose, which will not increase your burdens, will gain for you in trade, in employment, in all that we most want to maintain, the prosperity of

our industries. The one is profitless taxation, the other scientific taxation.

I have stated, then, the broad outline of the plan which I propose. As I have said, this can only be filled up when a mandate has been given to the Government, when they have the opportunity which they desire to negotiate and discuss. It may be that when we have these taxes on manufactured goods, we might be willing to remit or reduce them if we could get corresponding advantages from the country whose products would thus be taxed. It cannot, therefore, be precisely stated now what they would bring in or what we should do, but this is clear that, whatever happened, we should get something. We should either get something in the shape of a reduction of other taxation or something in the shape of a reduction of those prohibitive tariffs which now hamper so immensely our native industries. There will be, according to this plan, as I have said, no addition to the cost of living, but only a transfer from one item to another.

It remains to ask, what will the colonies say? 'I hear it said sometimes by people who have never, I think, visited the colonies and do not know much about them, that they will receive this offer with contempt, that they will spurn it, or that if they accept it they will give nothing in return. Well, I differ from these critics. I do not do this injustice to the patriotism or the good sense of the colonies. When the prime ministers, representing all the several States of the Empire, were here, this was the matter of most interesting discussion. Then it was that they pressed upon the Government the consideration of this question. They did not press—it is wrong, it is wicked, to say that they pressed it in any spirit of selfishness, with any idea of exclusive benefit to themselves. No, they had Mr. Rhodes's ideal in their minds. They asked for it as a tie, a practical tie, which should prevent separation, and I do not believe that they will treat ungenerously any offer that we may now be able to make them. They had not waited for an offer. Already Canada has given you a preference of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent.,

South Africa has given you a preference of 25 per cent., New Zealand has offered a preference of 10 per cent. The premier of Australia has promised to bring before Parliament a similar proposal. They have done all this in confidence, in faith which I am certain will not be disappointed—in faith that you will not be ungrateful, that you will not be unmindful of the influences which have weighed with them, that you will share their loyalty and devotion to an Empire which is theirs as well as ours, and which they also have done something to maintain.

It is because I sympathise with their object, it is because I appreciate the wisdom, ay, the generosity of their offer, it is because I see that things are moving and that an opportunity now in your hands once lost will never recur ; it is because I believe that this policy will consolidate the Empire—the Empire which I believe to be the security for peace and for the maintenance of our great British traditions—it is for all these things, and, believe me, for no personal ambition that I have given up the office which I was so proud to hold, and that now, when I might, I think, fairly claim a period of rest, I have taken up new burdens, and come before you as a missionary of Empire, to urge upon you again, as I did in the old times, when I protested against the disruption of the United Kingdom, once again to warn you, to urge you, to implore you to do nothing that will tend towards the disintegration of the Empire, and not to refuse to sacrifice a futile superstition, an inept prejudice, and thereby to lose the results of centuries of noble effort and patriotic endeavour.

RETALIATION

THE TOWN HALL, GREENOCK, OCTOBER 7, 1903

. . . I DEALT last night more especially with one great branch of the question of fiscal reform—that is, the question of preference with our colonies ; and I did that because it

is, of all the branches of this question, the one which most deeply moves me to exertion ; and, in the second place, because it is the most urgent part of the question. We have been going on for a great number of years, much too long, with our existing policy, and, so far as foreign countries are concerned, we might go on a little longer. A great part of the mischief has been done, and I do not know that we should suffer greatly if we waited a little longer. But that is not possible with regard to the colonies. The colonies have given you an opportunity. You cannot play fast and loose with these kinsmen of yours. There is no doubt in what spirit they have made their offer to you. It is in a spirit of brotherhood, and in a spirit of unselfish desire to promote the interests of the Empire of which they as well as we form an integral part. But you cannot expect them to wait for ever on your leisure. If you think that your interests lie in another direction, they will tell you to follow your interests. They are not suppliants at your feet. They are not asking you to make any sacrifice for them. They think that something can be done which may involve concession on both sides, but which in the long run will be good for both. If you, in your wisdom, come to the conclusion that what is asked from you is more than what they have to give in return, they will make no complaint ; they will accept your decision. But they will not repeat the offer ; and then they will perhaps receive all the reciprocal advantages, which they ask from you, from other countries, which are not possessed with our prejudices and superstitions, and which will be ready at once to jump at any offer of the kind that is now made to us.

I have dealt with the case of preferential arrangements with the colonies, and I proceed to speak a little more fully of the other branch of our policy, which is sometimes called 'retaliation' and which is sometimes called 'reciprocity.' Now, I begin with a confession of faith. I was brought up in the pure doctrine of Free Trade. I will not say that I believed it to be inspired, but I believed the statements of those who had preached it and who induced the country to

adopt it. I accepted it as a settled fact ; and nobody could have surprised me more than if, twenty, or still more, thirty years ago, he had told me that I should now be criticising the doctrine which I then accepted. But thirty years is a long time. Has nothing changed in thirty years ? Everything has changed. Politics have changed, science has changed, and trade has changed. The conditions with which we have to deal are altogether different to the conditions with which we had to deal thirty years ago. Let no man say, because to-day you and I are in favour of retaliation, or what our opponents calls ' protection,' that that is at all inconsistent with our having been Free Traders under totally different conditions. When the temperature goes up to a hundred degrees, I put on my thinnest clothes ; when it goes down below zero, there is nothing too warm for me to wear. When the prophecies of those who supported Free Trade appeared to be in the course of realisation, what reason was there why any of us should consider the subject or should express any doubt ? And for something like five-and-twenty or thirty years after Free Trade was preached and adopted, there was no doubt whatever in my mind that it was a good policy for this country, and that our country prospered under it more than it would have done under any other system. That was for five-and-twenty years. What has happened during the last thirty years ? In the last thirty years the whole conditions have changed : and it seems to me to be not the policy of a Liberal or the policy of a Radical, as I understood such a policy twenty or thirty years ago, but the policy of a rabid and a reactionary Tory to say that when all the conditions have changed you should not change your policy too.

Now, let us look at some of these changes. There was nothing upon which Mr. Cobden was more assured, more honestly convinced, than that Free Trade, as he understood it, was such a good thing that if we gave the example every other nation would follow. He said in the most positive terms that if we adopted the policy of Free Trade five years would not pass over before all the other nations adopted

our views, and if they did not—he refused to conceive such a hypothesis—but his argument went to show that if they did not adopt our policy then they would be ruined, and we should gain by their distress. We are a great people, but, after all, I have never been able to believe that all the wisdom in the world was absolutely domiciled in this country. I have a great opinion of our American cousins. I have an idea that they are people with whom you ought to deal in the most friendly spirit, but you had better not shut your eyes. I have some considerable respect for the German people. I recognise that they have been and still are the most scientifically educated people on the face of the globe. I have a great regard for our neighbours the French. I think they have done immense service to knowledge and civilisation in our past history. I do not believe that all these people are fools; and when I find that they absolutely refuse to adopt the Cobdenite principle and to accept Free Trade as the model and example which it was represented to be, I say to myself, ‘It is worth thinking over. I have perhaps been wrong to be as certain as I was of the wisdom of our policy,’—but that alone would not have moved me. If, in spite of my respect for the Americans, the French, and the Germans, I had found that the facts were against them, if I had found that they were being injured because they had adopted Protection, and that we were progressing enormously because we had adopted Free Trade, then I should be in favour of it in spite of the majority being against me.

What is the policy of these other nations? It has been, not a haphazard policy, but a policy deliberately adopted and deliberately pursued. It is a policy to use tariffs to increase home trade, and, if you like, to exclude foreign trade. All these nations to which I have referred, and every other civilised nation on the face of the earth, have adopted a tariff with the object of keeping the home market to the home population and not from any want of friendship to us. I do not believe they have been in the slightest degree actuated by ill-feeling to Great Britain; but because

they thought it was necessary for their own security and prosperity, they have done everything in their power to shut out British goods. They have passed tariff after tariff. They began perhaps with a low tariff. They continued it as long as it was successful. If they found it ceased to do what it was wanted to do, they increased it; and what it was wanted to do was to exclude foreign manufactures, and above all to exclude the manufactures of this country, which at one time held the supremacy of trade in the world, and which was the greatest centre of industry in any part of it.

That was a deliberate policy; there is no doubt about that. Has it succeeded? It has, whether it was right or wrong. What these people intended to do they have done; and if you look back for any term of years you will find that the exports of British manufactures have fallen off to these countries, while their exports to us have risen. There may be something wrong in my constitution, but I never like being hit without striking back again. But there are some people who like to be trampled upon. I admire them, but I will not follow their example. I am an advocate of peace, no man more so. I wish to live quietly, comfortably, and in harmony with all my fellow-creatures, but I am not in favour of peace at any price. I am a Free Trader. I want to have free exchange with all the nations of the world, but if they will not exchange with me, then I am not a Free Trader at any price. And again I say it may be a defect in my constitution, but it seems to me that the men who do not care for the Empire, the men who will sooner suffer injustice than go to war, the men who would surrender rather than take up arms in their own defence, they are the men in favour of doing in trade exactly what they are willing to do in political relations. I do not care to what party they belong. I am not one of that party, and accordingly, when I find the effect of this policy on the part of other countries, I look about for a means of meeting it.

Last night I said, quoting from figures, that the exports of British manufactures to the principal protected countries

had fallen over £42,000,000 in the course of thirty years. The *Glasgow Herald* this morning says incidentally that I ought not to have chosen that particular period. I assure the *Glasgow Herald* that I did not choose it with any sinister purpose. I thought thirty years was a good long time and a fair time to go back ; but I invite them to choose any other period, I do not care what period. In this controversy which I am commencing here I use figures as illustrations. I do not pretend that they are proofs. The proof will be found in the argument, and not in the figures. But I use figures as illustrations to show what the argument is. The argument which I use, and which I defy the *Glasgow Herald* to contradict, is that since these tariffs were raised against us our exports to the countries which raised them have been continually decreasing. Yes ; but that is not all. If their prosperity had been going down in equal proportion it would be no argument at all. While our exports to them have continually been decreasing, their exports to us have continually been increasing.

How do the Free Traders explain that ? Their view is that these foolish Americans, these ridiculous Germans, these antiquated Frenchmen, have been ruining themselves all this time. They may have kept their home market ; but they must have lost their foreign market. How can the good people whose cost of living has been raised—who have the little loaf and not the big loaf—who are hampered by tariff protection, though they may keep their own trade, how can they do a foreign trade ? It may be very extraordinary, but they have done it. Their export trade has increased in very much greater proportion than our trade, the trade of the Free Trade country which has the big loaf, which has all this freedom, and none of these disadvantages. I say that is a state of things which demands consideration. We are losing both ways. We are losing our foreign markets, because whenever we begin to do a trade the door is slammed in our faces with a whacking tariff. We go to another trade. We do it for a few months or for a few years, but again a tariff is imposed, and that is shut out. One industry after

another suffers similarly ; and in that way we lose our foreign trade, and, as if that was not enough, these same foreigners who shut us out, invade our markets and take the work out of the hands of our working people and leave us doubly injured.

Now, I say that is unfair and one-sided. In my opinion it threatens most seriously the position of every manufacturer, and, above all, of every working man in this kingdom. It threatens the position of the manufacturer. He may lose all his capital. His buildings may be empty ; but he will perhaps have something left, and he can invest it in manufacture in some foreign country, where he will give employment to foreign workmen. Yes, the manufacturer may save himself. But it is not for him that I am chiefly concerned. It is for you—the workmen—I say to you that to you the loss of employment means more than the loss of capital to any manufacturer. You cannot live upon your investments in a foreign country. You live on the labour of your hands—and if that labour is taken from you, you have no recourse, except, perhaps, to learn French or German.

Now, I go back for a minute to consider the importance of the question that I have asked. If there are Free Traders—I should rather say Free Importers, for in a sense we are all Free Traders—if there are Free Importers in Greenock you may have an opportunity of discussing this matter with them afterwards in a quiet and friendly way. Ask them this question : You say protection or retaliation will be very bad for this kingdom. How do you account for the fact that all these great nations, without exception, which have adopted the system which you say is bad, have prospered more than you have done ? The Cobden Club says it is all right. But the Cobden Club has not answered that question ; and I advise them to write to their foreign members and see whether they can tell them why Germany and France and the United States of America—and if you will remove all these from the calculation, then I take small countries, such a country as Sweden, for instance—why have all these countries prospered under a system which they declare would

be ruinous to us ? When that question is answered, I think that my occupation will be gone. I shall hide my diminished head, and make room for the foreign members. Now, I do not believe that these foreign countries are wrong. I believe they are better strategists than we have been. This policy, as announced by Mr. M'Kinley in America, and not by Mr. M'Kinley alone, but by the greatest Americans long before his time, by President Lincoln, by men like the original founders of the Constitution—this policy, announced in Germany by Prince Bismarck, who was in his time a rather considerable personage—this policy, announced in France by many of their most distinguished statesmen—here is no policy to take lightly.

Its main idea is to keep for a manufacturing country its home industry, to fortify the home industry, to make it impregnable ; then, having left the fort behind, so protected that no enemy could attack it with possible success, to move forward and invade other countries, and attack especially one country, and that is our own, which we have left totally unguarded against all these assaults. We have left it unguarded because we think we are wiser than all the rest of the world ; and the result has been, that although our fort has not been taken—well, it has received a very heavy battering. The time may come when we shall be unable any longer to defend it.

Now, these foreign countries have every advantage in their attack. They do not come like unarmed savages, even to attack such a defenceless village as Great Britain : they come with bounties of every kind. They have none of the disadvantages—I mean in an economic sense—from which we suffer. We, in a spirit of humanity of which I entirely approve, have passed legislation, to which I may say without boasting I have myself contributed, to raise the standard of living amongst our working people, to secure to them higher wages, to save them from the competition of men of a lower social scale. We have surrounded them with regulations which are intended to provide for their safety. We have secured them, or the majority of them,

against the pecuniary loss which would follow upon accidents incurred in the course of their employment.

There is not one of those things which I have not supported. There is not one of them which I did not honestly believe to be for the advantage of the country. But they have all entailed expense. They have all raised the cost of production; and what can be more illogical than to raise the cost of production in this country in order to promote the welfare of the working classes, and then to allow the products of other countries—which are not surrounded by any similar legislation, which are free from all similar cost and expenditure—freely to enter our country in competition with our goods, which are hampered in the struggle? I say to my fellow-countrymen, and especially to the great mass of the people who depend on their work for their wages and for the subsistence of their families—you are inconsistent, you are adopting a course that is suicidal. If you allow this state of things to go on, what will follow? If these foreign goods come in cheaper, one of two things must follow: either you will have to give up the conditions you have gained, either you will have to abolish and repeal the Fair Wages Clause and the Factory Acts and the Compensation to Workmen Acts, either you will have to take lower wages, or you will lose your work. You cannot keep your work at this higher standard of living and wages if at the same time you allow foreigners at a lower standard and lower rate of pay to send their goods freely in competition with yours.

The Cobden Club all this time rubs its hands in the most patriotic spirit and says: 'Ah, yes; but how cheaply you are buying!' Yes, but think how that affects different classes in the community. Take the capitalist—the man living upon his income. His interest is to buy in the cheapest market, because he does not produce. The cheaper he can get every article he consumes, the better for him. He need not buy a single article in this country; he need not make a single article. He can invest his money in foreign countries and live upon the interest; and then, in

the returns of the prosperity of the country, it will be said that the country is growing richer because he is growing richer. But what about the working men? What about the class that depends upon having work in order to earn wages or subsistence at all? They cannot do without work; and yet the work will go if the article is not produced in this country. This is the state of things against which I am protesting.

Now, I call your attention to a matter of the greatest interest and importance which has just come to my knowledge. In a letter recently published in the *Times* a correspondent calls attention to an interview which was held in Philadelphia and published in the *Philadelphia Ledger*, a great newspaper of that city, between a director of the American Steel Trust and a reporter. The American Steel Trust is the greatest of all American Trusts. It produces at the present time about twenty million tons of steel and iron per annum, a very much greater quantity than is produced in this country. The director told the reporter that trade was falling off. There are many reasons for that. Financial difficulties in America seem likely to hasten the result. Orders are falling off; the demand for railways is less; and this director anticipated that before long the American demand would fall several millions of tons short of the American supply. 'What are you going to do?' said the reporter. 'Oh,' said he, 'we have made all our preparations. We are not going to reduce our output. We are not going to blow out a single furnace. No; if we did, that would be injurious to America. We should have to turn out of our works into the streets hundreds of thousands of American workmen. And, therefore, what we are going to do, is to invade foreign markets.' And remember, it may not be easy for them to invade the German market, or the French market, or the Russian market, because in every case they will find a tariff which, if necessary, can be raised against them. They will go to the only free market, they will come to this country, and before you are two or three years older, and unless there is a change in the situa-

tion, I warn you you will have dumped down in your country perhaps as much as two million tons of American iron.

There is no iron manufacturer in this country who can regard such a proceeding as that without the greatest anxiety. You will see many ironworks closed, you may see others continued at a loss, struggling for better times ; but what will become of the workmen employed ? Hundreds of thousands of English workmen will be thrown out of employment in order to make room for hundreds of thousands of American workmen, who are kept in employment during bad times by this system. I sympathise with the American workman. I am glad that he, or any man, should be kept in employment ; but, after all, I belong to this country. I admit that I am not cosmopolitan enough to wish to see the happiness, success, or prosperity of American workmen secured by the starvation and misery and suffering of British workmen.

I venture to say that no one has striven more continuously than I have done to advance the condition of the working people of this country ; but of this I am certain—that what I and what others have done is a trifle in comparison with what may be done. It is as nothing in comparison with any policy or legislation which would ensure to every willing and industrious workman in this country continuous employment, full employment, at fair wages ; and if your employment is filched from you, if you have to accept starvation wages, if you have to give up the advantages which you have obtained, then I tell you that your loaf may be as big as a mountain and as cheap as dirt, but you will be in the long run the greatest sufferers.

Let us look a little further into the matter ; and, again, I will give you a figure or two as an illustration. Take other periods, if you like, this time, in deference to the *Glasgow Herald*. I will not go back to 1872 as a starting-point. I will take 1882—that is twenty years ago. Since 1882 the total imports of foreign manufactures have increased £64,000,000, and, meanwhile, our exports of manufactures to these countries have increased £12,000,000, so

that in the balance we have lost £52,000,000. I know perfectly well that it is very difficult to make people appreciate the meaning of a million. People who very seldom see many shillings or many pounds together find it very difficult to understand what ten hundred thousand pounds means, and still more what fifty-two times ten hundred thousand pounds means. Therefore I intend, as far as I can, throughout this discussion to translate money into work. What would this fifty-two millions of money have given to you if you had been able to get it? £52,000,000 a year of goods would cost £26,000,000 a year in wages alone, and £26,000,000 of wages would have provided constant employment at 30s. a week for 333,000 work-people, and it would have provided, of course, subsistence for their families, that is, for more than 1,500,000 altogether. I think we are all agreed that that would be worth having. If you gained this employment to-morrow, if any trade suddenly sprang up anywhere which employed 333,000 men and kept 1,500,000 people in comparative comfort, would you not say that the person who brought it to you was the greatest philanthropist you had ever known?

But what do the Free Traders say? No, I will not call them what they are not—Free Traders. What do Free Importers say? ‘Yes, it is quite true that foreigners are doing the work of 333,000 British, and that they are earning the wages that would have supported 1,500,000 British people. That is true; but that does not matter in the least to the British workman or the British people, because they have found other employment. Having been turned out of their old employment, they have gone into something else, in which they are getting just as much. They are just as well off as they were before. They have not lost by the change, even if the foreigner has gained.’ It is a very comforting doctrine for the armchair politician. But is it true?

I come to a subject which has a particular interest for a Greenock audience. It so happens that you have had in your midst a certain experience of a large trade which

has been taken from you by the superior advantages of the foreigner. Has it injured you in the slightest degree or not? Do you care whether that trade went or not, or whether it should be re-established or not? Would you like to see your trade going, with one after another following it, always confident that your friends the Cobden Club would say, 'Oh, but you will find some other occupation?' I say you are an illustration. Of course, I refer to sugar. Greenock was one of the great centres of the sugar trade. You had many refineries; it was a profitable trade; it not only employed a great number of work-people itself, but it also gave employment in subsidiary industries to a great number of your countrymen.

Then came the foreign competition, aided by bounties, and your trade declines so seriously that only the very best, the very richest, the most enterprising, the most inventive, can possibly retain their hold upon it. If there had been no bounties and no unfair competition of this kind, what would have happened? In the last twenty or thirty years the consumption of sugar throughout the world has increased enormously. The consumption in this country has increased enormously; and you would have had your share. I do not hesitate to say that, if normal conditions and equal fairness had prevailed, at this moment in Greenock, quite independently of the other industries you may have found to occupy you, there would have been in sugar alone ten times as many men employed as there were in the most palmy days of the trade. But normal conditions have not obtained. You have been the sufferers; and a great number of your refineries have disappeared altogether. The capital invested in them has been lost, and the workmen who worked in them—what has become of them?

Free imports have destroyed this industry, at all events for the time, and it is not easy to recover an industry when it has once been lost. They have destroyed sugar-refining for a time as one of the great staple industries of the country, which it ought always to have remained. They have destroyed agriculture. Mr. Cobden—and again I am sure

he spoke the truth as it appeared to him—was convinced that, if his views were carried out, not an acre of ground would go out of cultivation in this country, and no tenant farmer would be worse off. I am not here to speak to an agricultural audience ; but if I were, what a difference could I show between that expectation and hope of Mr. Cobden's and the actual circumstances of the case ! Agriculture, as the greatest of all trades and industries of this country, has been practically destroyed. Sugar has gone ; silk has gone ; iron is threatened ; wool is threatened ; cotton will go ! How long are you going to stand it ? At the present moment these industries, and the working men who depend upon them, are like sheep in a field. One by one they allow themselves to be led out to slaughter, and there is no combination, no apparent prevision of what is in store for the rest of them. Do you think, if you belong at the present time to a prosperous industry, that your prosperity will be allowed to continue ? Do you think that the same causes which have destroyed some of our industries, and which are in the course of destroying others, will not be equally applicable to you when your turn comes ? This is a case in which selfishness will not pay. This is a case in which you should take warning by the past, in which you can show some foresight as to the future.

What is the remedy ? What is it that the Prime Minister proposed at Sheffield ? He said—I am not quoting, his exact words—Let us get rid of the chains which we ourselves have forged, and which have fettered our action. Let us claim some protection like every other civilised nation. Let us say to these foreign countries : ‘ Gentlemen, we desire to be friends with you. We are Free Traders in the best sense of the word. We are ready to exchange freely ; but, if you say that it is your settled policy that you will not buy from us, we will tax your exports to us. We will look further afield—no, not further afield, we will look nearer home. We will go to our own friends, who are perfectly ready to meet us on fair terms, who ask only for a reciprocal response.’

Then we are told that if we do this the foreigners will be angry with us ! Has it come to that with Great Britain ? It is a craven argument ; it is worthy of the Little Englander ; it is not possible for any man who believes in his own country. The argument is absurd. Who is to suffer ? Are we so poor that we are at the mercy of every foreign State—that we cannot hold our own—that we are to fear their resentment if we imitate their own policy ? Are we to receive their orders ‘ with bated breath and whispering humbleness ’ ? No, if that were true, I should say that the star of England has already set ; it would not be worth any one’s while to care to speculate on her possible future. But it is not true. There is not a word of truth in it. We have nothing to fear from the foreigners. I do not believe in a war of tariffs, but if there were to be a war of tariffs, I know we should not come out second best. Why, at the present time ours is the greatest market in the whole world. We are the best customers of all those countries. There are many suitors for our markets. We may reject the addresses of some, but there is no fear that we shall not have other offers. It is absolutely absurd to suppose that all these countries, keenly competitive among themselves, would agree among themselves to fight with us when they might benefit at the expense of their neighbours. Why, at the present time we take from Germany about twice as much as she takes from us. We take from France about three times as much, and from the United States of America we take about six times as much as they take from us. After all that, do we stand to lose if there is to be a war of tariffs ?

Ah ! and there is something else. We have what none of these countries have. We have something, the importance of which I am trying to impress upon my countrymen, which at present they have not sufficiently appreciated. We have a great reserve in the sons of Britain across the seas. There is nothing we want that they cannot supply ; there is nothing we sell that they cannot buy. One great cause for the prosperity of the United States of America,

admitted by every one to be a fact, is that they are a great empire of over 70,000,000 of people ; that the numbers of these people alone, without any assistance from the rest of the world, would ensure a large amount of prosperity. Yes ; but the British Empire is even greater than the United States of America. We have a population—it is true, not all a white population—but we have a white population of over 50,000,000 against the 70,000,000—who are not all white, by the by—against the 70,000,000 of America. We have, in addition, 350,000,000 or more of people under our protectorate, under our civilisation, sympathising with our rule, grateful for the benefits that we accord to them, and all of them more or less prospective or actual customers of this country.

In times past we have in some inconceivable way ignored our colonies. We have not appreciated their greatness. We have not had imagination enough to see that, great as they are, there is no limit to what they may become. We have gone through a time (it is a most significant fact) when the men who advocated Free Trade in this country were at the same time absolutely indifferent to all idea of empire, and considered the colonies encumbrances which we should be glad to get rid of. That lasted for thirty years, and in the course of that time we tried the patience of our sons across the seas. We tried hardly their love of us and their devotion to the mother country. They began to think that we had no sympathy with their aspirations ; that we regarded them as troublesome children and wished to get them out of the house, and therefore that it would be their duty to break with the sentiment which would otherwise have held us together ; that it would be their duty to fend for themselves, and to leave out of account everything which concerned the Empire of which they formed a part. That was not their fault ; that was our fault, the result of our policy. Although we have done our best to correct that impression, although there is not a man living who thinks, or, if there is one who thinks, there is not one who dares to say, that he would wish to get rid of

the colonies, that he does not desire their closer union with us, yet we have a good deal to make up, for we have to show that, whereas at one time we or our ancestors advocated separation, we are now prepared to do all that in reason can be asked of us in order to promote a greater and a closer union.

The colonies are no longer in their infancy. They are growing rapidly to a vigorous manhood. Now is the time—the last time—that you can bind them closer to you. If now you disregard their aspirations and wishes, if when they make you an offer not specially in their interests, but in the interests of the Empire of which we are all a portion, you reject this offer or treat it with scorn, you may do an injury which will be irreparable ; and, whatever you yourselves may feel in after life, be sure that your descendants will scorn and denounce the cowardly and selfish decision which you will have adopted. We can if we will make the Empire mutually supporting. We can make it one for defence, one for common aid and assistance. We are face to face at this time with complications in which we may find ourselves alone. We have to face the envy of other people who have noted our wonderful success, although I do not think it has ever done them any harm. We have to face their envy, their jealousy, their desire, perhaps, to share the wealth which they think us to possess. I am not afraid. We shall be isolated. Yes ; but our isolation will be a splendid one if we are fortified, if this country is buttressed, by the affection and love of its kinsmen, those sons of Britain throughout the world, and we shall rest secure if we continue to enjoy the affection of all our children.

When I was in South Africa nothing was more inspiring, nothing more encouraging, to a Briton than to find how the men who had either themselves come from our shores or were the descendants of those who had, still retained the old traditions, still remembered that their forefathers were buried in our churchyards, that they spoke a common language, that they were under a common flag, still in their

hearts desired to be remembered above all as British subjects, equally entitled with us to a part in the great Empire which they as well as we have contributed to make. The sentiment is there—powerful, vivifying, influential for good. I did not hesitate, however, to preach to them that it was not enough to shout for Empire, that it was not enough to bear this sentiment in their hearts, but that they and we alike must be content to make a common sacrifice, if that were necessary, in order to secure the common good.

To my appeal they rose. And I cannot believe that here in this country, in the mother country, their enthusiasm will not find an echo. They felt, as I felt, and as you feel, that all history is the history of States once powerful and then decaying. Is Britain to be numbered among the decaying States? Is all the glory of the past to be forgotten? Are we to prove ourselves unregenerate sons of the forefathers who left us so glorious an inheritance? Are the efforts of all our sons to be frittered away? Are all their sacrifices to be vain? Or are we to take up a new youth as members of a great Empire, which will continue for generation after generation, the strength, the power, and the glory of the British race?

That is the issue that I present to you. That is the great and paramount issue. It is also a question of your employment, of your wages, of your standard of living, of the prosperity of the trades in which you are engaged.

These are questions vital to the people of Great Britain. They are not to be decided by partisan outcries or personal abuse; they are not to be decided by a ridiculous appeal to the big loaf and the little loaf, to bogies which do not frighten sensible people, to bogies which are only addressed to the timid man, or to the man who is so prejudiced that he cannot open his mind.

Those are the issues that I present to you; and, gentlemen, the decision rests with you. Thank goodness, we enjoy a democratic constitution. Rightly or wrongly, and, as I think, rightly, the power lies with the people.¹ No

¹ This was spoken in 1903, when such a boast was still apposite.

dictatorship is possible ; no policy can be forced upon you to give a preference to the colonies, or to put a duty upon foreign manufactures, or to protect your trade. If you choose to remain unprotected, if you do not care for your colonies, no statesman, however wise, can save those colonies as part of the Empire ; for you cannot shift the responsibility upon us. We look to you ; we appeal to you ; we try to put the question fairly before you. The decision, as I have said, is yours.

I have been in political life for thirty years, and it has been a cardinal feature of my political creed that I have trusted the people. I believe in their judgment, in their good sense, their patriotism. I think sometimes their instincts are quicker, their judgment more generous and enlightened, than that even of classes who have greater education, who have perhaps greater belongings, who are more timid and cautious. One of the greatest of our statesmen said something to this effect—that the people were generally in the right, but that they sometimes mistook their physician. Gentlemen, do not mistake your physician. The other day, in the speech of a Scottish member, he referred to this subject. He said it was a matter for congratulation that in putting these views before my countrymen I was committing political suicide ; my career would certainly be terminated. It was a kindly thought graciously expressed, worthy of the man who uttered it, but it does not alarm me. I have in times past more than once taken my political life in my hand in order to teach that which I believe to be true. No man as a statesman is worth his salt who is not prepared to do likewise. I care nothing about the personal result. I beg you not to consider it for a moment ; but I appeal to you to consider that in this matter the interests of your country, the interests of your children, the interests of the Empire are all at stake, and I ask you to consider impartially the arguments that I have put before you. I pray you may give a right decision.

THE PRICE OF WHEAT

NEWCASTLE, OCTOBER 20, 1903

[In this speech Mr. Chamberlain answered certain critics of his policy—as thus far set forth—at considerable length and detail. The following passages are concerned with remarks by Lord Goschen on the effect of Tariff Reform on the price of wheat, and with what Professor Huxley might have called ‘the awful consequences argufiers.’]

LORD GOSCHEN proceeds by a number of statements to show that wheat has risen in France and Germany in consequence of the tax and to the amount of the tax. If that were true it would be a very exceptional occurrence. But it is not true—that is to say, it is not generally true. But I want for one moment to ask you this question. Suppose it had been true, suppose Germany and France had paid more for their wheat in proportion to the tax which they levied, what has happened in consequence? Lord Goschen tells you that France only takes 2 per cent. of its corn from abroad, that it is self-sufficient, and that Germany only takes 30 per cent., whereas, he says, we take four-fifths. That is not a comforting reflection. It is too big a question for me to deal with to-night; but it is not a comforting reflection to think that we, a part of the British Empire that might be self-sufficient and self-contained, are nevertheless dependent, according to Lord Goschen, for four-fifths of our supplies upon foreign countries, any one of which, by shutting their doors upon us, might reduce us to a state of almost absolute starvation. But there is something more than that. What the working men have to fear—and I call the attention of working men to this point—is not the tax, not any tax that any Government in this country would ever think of putting upon corn, but the working man has to fear the result of a shortage of supplies and of a consequent monopoly. If in time of war one of the great countries—Russia, Germany, or the United States of America—were to cut off its supply, it would in-

fallibly raise the price according to the quantity which we received from that country. If there were no war, if in times of peace these countries wanted their corn for themselves, which they will do some day, or if there were bad harvests which there may be in either of these cases, you will find the price of corn rising many times higher than any tax I have ever suggested. And there is only one remedy for it. There is only one remedy for a short supply. It is to increase your sources of supply. You must call in the new world, the colonies, to redress the balance of the old. Call in the colonies, and they will answer to your call with very little stimulus and encouragement. They will give you a supply which will be never-failing and all-sufficient.

(a) THE EFFECT ON THE PRICE OF WHEAT

I do not agree with Lord Goschen that the prices of corn or food or meat varied in foreign countries, in Germany, Italy, France, and the United States, according to the tax. On the contrary, they have varied, but they have varied according to many different circumstances, and sometimes, not infrequently, when the tax has gone up, the price has gone down. Now I maintain that in the new taxes which I propose there is every advantage, firstly, because they are small—and the economists say that the smaller the tax is the less likely it is to be paid by the consumer—in the first place, they are small; and, in the second place, colonial trade and home trade will be free. In these circumstances I am convinced that of the new taxes not more than half will be borne by the consumer; and, if that be true, not only will he not be called upon for any sacrifice at all, but he will make a profit out of this arrangement, a profit which I have calculated as varying from 2d. to 3d. per week. That is what I ask you working men to do. I ask you to make a transfer of taxes which under no circumstances can cost you anything, but which may benefit you to this small extent of 2d. or 3d. a week, and which in addition will give to you and your children and your comrades more work

of a kind which is most profitable for you to do, and that will help you to take your part in welding together our Empire throughout the world.

But now I come to the most important of all questions to my mind raised by preferential tariffs. I advocate them because, in the first place, they will stimulate colonial trade. We shall do more trade with our friends, and I do not think we shall do much less with our rivals. But the main thing is that we shall do more with our friends, and we shall do it under more favourable circumstances. I have told you that the increase of this trade is essential to your prosperity. But there is something else. This is the only way. I defy you to find any other. I take all my opponents—those who differ from me, those with whom I am dealing, and those with whom I am not dealing—and I say that there is not a man of them who can give you any alternative to what I am proposing, any alternative for attaining the object which I have in view. You cannot weld your Empire together, you cannot draw closer the bonds that now unite us except by some form of commercial union. I say that none of our opponents have put forward any alternative. It is true that a statesman for whom I have the greatest respect, and who lives in the neighbourhood—I mean Sir Edward Grey—has told us that, in his opinion, it would be a very good thing to have an Imperial Council. Well, who first proposed an Imperial Council? It was not Sir Edward Grey. It was I. I mean of late years. It was proposed before me. There is nothing new under the sun. But I have pressed it more than any of my predecessors. I have done everything in my power to bring it about on several occasions—at former conferences, in public speeches, and in private speeches. I have ventured to speak on behalf of my countrymen here and to say to our kinsmen beyond the seas: 'We want your aid. We call you to our councils;' come and take a part in them,' and they have decided they will not advance along that line and federate in that way. I do not mean to say they will always refuse it; on the contrary, I believe that if my pro-

posals were carried a Federal Council would be a necessity ; but you cannot have, at present at any rate, and I do not see any sign of your ever having, a Federal Council first. The colonies want to know what it is they are to discuss before they come to your council. When you have got a commercial union, that will be something to discuss—but meanwhile this alternative so lightly thrown down by Sir Edward Grey is no alternative at all. You cannot approach closer union by that means. I tried next in connection with Imperial defence. Again I was beaten by the difficulties of the situation ; but I did not on that account give it up, and I come back, therefore, to this idea of commercial union, which will bring us together, which will necessitate the council, which council in time may do much more than it does in the beginning and may leave us, though it will not find us, a great, united, loyal, and federated Empire.

I say that that is the only way in which you can approach this question. You will have to move gradually, but this is the first step, and I ask you to take it. Why should we not take it ? The answer made to that is, in my opinion, antiquated, inconsistent, and, above all, it is mischievous. It is not an answer which ought to be made by men who have the Imperial cause at heart. What is said to me ? It is said : ‘ Mr. Chamberlain, of course, has got colonies on the brain. He thinks he discovered them.’ I know a good number of people who apparently have forgotten them. ‘ But he is so anxious,’ they continue, ‘ to secure their good will that he is prepared to wrong his own country in order to do it. He offers them a bribe. We are already doing more for them than they do for us, yet now we are called upon to make further sacrifices, to bind ourselves hand and foot without the slightest advantage in return.’ In my opinion, it is not wise or patriotic to say that kind of thing to your colonies, and it is not true ; and the very people who say this, in the same speeches say that it is no sacrifice at all, that it is no boon to the colonies, that the colonies would not accept it, that the benefit is so small that it is not worth their acceptance. Now, how can a benefit, which is so

great that the giving of it will ruin the United Kingdom, which they tell us is the most prosperous of countries in the world, yet be so small that the colonies would not think it worth picking up from the floor ? Then, again, they say in the same breath the colonies are selfish, that they will pursue their own interests, that they will do nothing for us ; and, on the other hand, they tell us that the colonies are so unselfish that they will do anything for us and ask nothing in return. But these are not serious answers to a serious question.

I ask for preferential tariffs in order to keep the Empire together. I have not said, as I am told I have, at least I have not intended to say, that if I do not get them the Empire will immediately break into fragments. I do not think that. I am not prophesying an immediate catastrophe. But I say that those only are entitled to the name of statesman who can foresee what is to happen at all events in their own world, and can provide for it. Now, I think that without these preferential tariffs you will not keep the Empire together. Lord Rosebery at Sheffield says : ' I do not find one jot or tittle of proof for this amazing assertion.' It is not my assertion ; it is Lord Rosebery's. I want to have this out with Lord Rosebery, not in any controversial spirit. I quoted, what I am going to quote to you again, at Glasgow some time before the Sheffield meeting, hoping that he would notice it. He did not notice it, and says, in fact, that this idea that a tariff is necessary to the Empire is an amazing idea, and there is no jot or tittle of proof for it. Yet in 1888, at Leeds, Lord Rosebery said : ' The people of this country will in a not too distant time have to make up their minds what position they want their colonies to occupy with respect to them, or whether they desire their colonies to leave them altogether. . . . It is, I believe, absolutely impossible for you to maintain, in the long run, your present loose and indefinable relation and preserve those colonies as part of the Empire.' That was what Lord Rosebery said in 1888, and what was his remedy then ? His remedy was this. He said : ' I do not see that you can

obtain the great boon of an Empire encircling the globe with a bond of commercial unity, without some self-sacrifice on your part.' In other words, the disease was the same, the prescription was the same. Lord Rosebery then thought that a commercial bond of unity was the way to bind the Empire together, and without it it would be absolutely impossible to preserve our existing relations. I really do not know that he has changed, because in the Sheffield speech he told his audience that this view of mine which I am anxious to impress upon you was not new. It is not new. I am not professing that it is a novelty. I am as conservative as the wildest Radical. He says these were his own suggestions when he was president of the Imperial Federation League. He went on to make the most marvellous statement I have ever heard an English statesman of his capacity make. He said that he did not believe that any minister could be found bold enough to carry it out. But I should have thought from that that, if any minister or ministry were found bold enough to press such a policy and to attempt to carry it, the most ardent of his colleagues, the most valiant of his comrades, would be Lord Rosebery himself.

(b) 'AWFUL CONSEQUENCES ARGUERS'

Well, Lord Goschen takes a different way. He is not waiting for the bold minister, but he says he warns his countrymen for heaven's sake not to come to terms with our own kith and kin. What a terrible thing! It is certain, he says, to breed a quarrel. The best way is to remain absolutely isolated; that if we made a treaty with them or with foreign powers that will involve a limitation of their freedom or of yours, and then, said Lord Goschen, think what the result may be. Certainly it will lead to a greater division of opinion rather than greater union. "Does Lord Goschen act in his own family upon that principle? Perhaps it is an impertinent thing to do to pursue any man into his own family, but I will put it generally. Do we act on that

principle ourselves ; do we refuse to take our children into our confidence ; do we refuse, when they are in our confidence, do we refuse to promise anything, to pledge anything, to come to any agreement with them ? Do we say, ' Don't let us talk upon this matter for fear we disagree ? ' But Lord Goschen did not always hold this extraordinary view, the effect of which would be that, if Lord Goschen should join another Government that Government must never make a treaty again. It applies as much to treaties about defence or anything else. The Japanese treaty, for instance, is absolutely condemned by the same argument which would also have condemned the Cobden treaty with France in 1860. But Lord Goschen said only twelve years ago : ' I must enter my protest against an extreme application of the view that under no circumstances could we make fiscal treaties with our colonies without injuring other portions of our trade. If we find we could make the whole Empire one as regards customs, surely we have the same right of Zollverein union with our colonies as Germany has with Bavaria or the United States among themselves. I claim for ourselves the same right.' The present proposal is not a proposal for absolute Free Trade in the Empire, which is what is meant by a Zollverein, and, therefore, Lord Goschen might properly say, ' Although I would support the one I will not support the other ' ; but it disposes of the principle of not making treaties, because if you made a treaty of Free Trade with your colonies there would be a much greater limitation of freedom on both sides than if you only dealt with half a dozen or more articles. Therefore I cannot think that Lord Goschen has seriously undertaken to put forward as a sufficient answer a case so weak as that.

I do not threaten your prosperity, although I say that if we continue on our present lines I think it will be seriously in danger. I have not threatened the immediate disruption of the Empire, but I do not believe we can permanently keep the Empire together except upon lines which have been understood and adopted and worked upon by other countries

with success. I do not believe that the United States would have been the great empire it is but for commercial agreement between the several states which form it. I do not believe that Germany would have been a great and powerful empire but for the agreement between the several states that created it ; and I do not believe that we shall be a powerful Empire, I do not believe that we shall be an Empire at all, unless we take similar steps. We have a state which differs indeed from theirs ; differs, in the first place, because it is greater, because it is more populous, differs, in the second place, because it is more universal in its products of every kind, differs also, as I think, in the fact that its growth is all before it, and whatever we may hope for to-day by the adoption of this policy we may fairly hope to gain much more if it be consistently pursued for generations. It is on that account, therefore, that I hold that the present time is so important. I ask you not to be frightened by bogies which are raised by our opponents, the bogy of dear food which will not come, the bogy of retaliation by other countries (which would certainly cost them a great deal more than us), by the terrible consequences of adopting a policy which has successfully promoted the interests of every other civilised country in the world. No, gentlemen, I ask you not to be frightened by threats of danger to come. But I do ask you to look at this matter with a great sense of responsibility, remembering that this Empire of ours, of which I believe we all in our hearts are proud, is a great trust committed to our hands. It has often been in the past, I am not prepared to deny it, a heavy charge and responsibility ; but it has made us what we are—it has taught us to see the virtue of national sacrifice, and we may in the future look for fruits from this tree which will justify all the pains that we may take in its cultivation. Therefore it is that I invite my countrymen now, when I firmly believe they have one of these opportunities that seldom come to us, now that they have the opportunity of making this Empire permanent, not to dismiss this possibility as a vain and empty dream. Remember that its realisation will be the

greatest glory that can ever fall to any statesman or to any nation. I ask them to take these things into their consideration and to come to a right decision.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE COLONIES

TYNEMOUTH, OCTOBER 21, 1903

... I ADMIT that I have changed my opinion. I admit that I have done so because, in my judgment, the circumstances have entirely changed in twenty years. I do not mean to say that in 1883 there were not some signs of danger which I myself perceived ; but I did not think that at the time there was any sufficient ground for coming to the people of this country to ask them to make a great change in their fiscal system. But since 1883 everything has changed in that direction. Since 1883 this great foreign competition has sprung up, these protective nations have grown up under a protective system, and instead of being ruined, as many men supposed they would be, they have prospered more and more. It is a matter of common knowledge, and I do not feel the least humiliation in saying that these facts have had an effect upon me, and they have changed my opinion as to what is the right course to take. There were many who were precursors in this policy, and if I had time, and it were interesting to go into these personal matters, I should like to consider whether the truth is that I am too late or that they were too early. My own feeling is that men like the venerable Sir Charles Hamond, late member for Newcastle, and Sir Farrar Ercroft, and other leaders in the Fair Trade movement—my opinion is that they were too early, and that, although the dangers which they suspected were real dangers, they had not manifested themselves clearly at that time. Therefore the majority of us were unable to appreciate the full force of their arguments. But now let to-day take care of to-day. Any man who approaches this question in an impartial spirit will have no difficulty in

seeing that all these dangers have greatly increased ; and, if they continue to increase in the same proportion, we shall not only lose our commercial supremacy but the whole character of this country will be changed, and in the course of another generation this will be much less an industrial country inhabited by a race of skilful artisans than a distributive country with a smaller population consisting of rich consumers on the one hand and people engaged in the work of distribution on the other. In itself, the country might still be richer, but it would be a country—I was almost going to say not worth living in, and at any rate not a country to be proud of.

That is the history of this question of retaliation. Surely it is not premature to raise it now, seeing that it was raised twenty years ago.

Then what about preferential tariffs and the closer relations with our colonies ? This branch of the question also is not new. It began at the great conference that was held in Ottawa in the time of Lord Rosebery's Government, and at that great conference it was proposed, unless I am mistaken, by an Australian, and seconded or supported by Mr. Hofmeyr, the greatest, I think, of all the Dutch statesmen that have ever held influence at the Cape, and it was supported by members from Canada. And what was the proposal ? It was for preferential trade throughout the Empire upon all articles upon which taxation was levied. Lord Ripon felt himself obliged to refuse that proposal. After I came into office I had to reconsider the question immediately. I made two speeches on different occasions, in which, accepting the principle of Preference, I urged the colonies to go farther and establish a real Free Trade throughout the Empire, with duties on all foreign countries. Then I presided over two great conferences—one the Jubilee Conference, the other the Coronation Conference of the Premiers of all the self-governing colonies. And this matter of preferential tariffs was before both conferences, was the matter of particular discussion by the conferences—and as the result of the second conference a unanimous

resolution was arrived at, asking the consideration of the Imperial Government to the desire of the colonies that in return for preferences they were willing to give to us we should give them the preference in the case of other existing taxes in which they were interested. What happened after that? Nothing was done. Canada, in spite of this rebuff, gave us a preference of $33\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. upon its duties, and the result of that has been that our trade with Canada, which was falling to nothing, has increased from about £6,000,000 in a few years till this year, when it will be about £11,000,000; that is to say, it has nearly doubled. The Australian premiers promised to move their parliaments to give us a similar preference. The matter is still under discussion in New Zealand and in Australia. In South Africa, the Governments of South Africa, the self-governing and the new colonies, have agreed to give a preference of 25 per cent. Will you bear in mind that all this has been done without any promise of a return of a similar character—that is to say, it is done voluntarily by the colonies. Is it not a mean thing afterwards to say to these men, when they come and ask you for something. ‘You are asking too much? You are giving nothing, and we are asked to ruin our trade in order to benefit yours.’ There is absolutely no foundation for a charge of the kind, which is a calumny on the patriotism and on the generosity of our colonies.

Well, they give us these preferences. They were the subject of the same sort of political controversy in the respective colonies which a similar proposal has raised in this country. There was a party in Canada who said: ‘Why have you given this for nothing? Why don’t you make a bargain with Great Britain, with the mother country? Why do not you ask them to give us a preference?’ Well, they did ask us to give a preference, and at the last conference the Canadian Minister said: ‘You have got a corn tax of only 1s. a quarter, which cannot be appreciated in coin of the realm.’ Not a farthing, but less than one-eighth of a penny per quartern loaf—supposing it were all paid by the consumer. They said: ‘It is of no real

consequence, but as a matter of sentiment it will show your feeling towards us as we have shown our feeling towards you. Give us a drawback. That will not hurt your people. On the contrary, if you are right in thinking that they pay the tax, if you allow our corn to come in free it will have a tendency to reduce the price, and, therefore, you will be benefiting the consumer, and at the same time giving us a little benefit, and will enable us to do what we want—not merely to give this 33½ per cent., but also to give you something else. You could in this way touch the sentiment of reciprocity throughout the colonies, and your action will be appreciated there. It will enable us to go with you in this great Imperial crusade, and it will enable us to carry your ‘policy further.’ Well, sir, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer declined to comply with that request. He was ready to keep on the corn tax, but he would not do so to give any preference to the colonies. Some day, before I am done with this discussion, I am going to say a word or two about that. For the moment I merely state the fact. Mr. Ritchie threatened resignation unless he was permitted to take off the corn tax without giving any preference to our colonies. I am not blaming him. But what was the immediate result? Then we stood in face of our colonies, and I, as Colonial Secretary, was expected to say to them: ‘Not only will we not put on a tax in order to give a preference to you, but now that we have a tax which does us no harm, does not add one farthing to the cost of the living of any working man, and of which nobody complains, we insist upon taking it off, for fear we should be obliged to give our own kinsmen a slight preference.’ The situation became critical at once. I knew enough of the colonies to know that, generous as they are, true as they are, loyal as they are, they are very sensitive as to your opinion. And if you are going to show in these matters that you care nothing for their opinion, if you will not even give consideration to them, and if you will not meet them in any way, even if it does no injury to yourselves, because of some pedantic idea of a Free Trader or Free Importer, I do not

see how you are going to maintain this good feeling which we are all glad to believe obtains at the present time. We cannot afford to play tricks with so precious a gift.

Under these circumstances there was only one thing open to us; we could not afford to lose our Chancellor of the Exchequer just before the Budget was to be introduced. We had to accept the view which was forced upon us, but we claimed—those of us who thought as I do claimed—that under the circumstances this matter must be brought before the country. We claimed that this matter must be discussed in all its branches, and thereupon it was that Mr. Balfour, making his speech to the deputation who came to him about the corn tax, and I myself, making a speech at Birmingham, pointed out to the people of this country what were the tremendous issues which were now in their hands, and implored them to consider them before the next election. In my case, at any rate, I propounded a policy which I believe to be the only one which will maintain our Empire as it is. In these circumstances I think, gentlemen, that this matter was not prematurely introduced. It was quite time that the question was raised by some one. It is a duty, and a heavy burden and responsibility, as you can all understand; but I do not think that it fell more clearly upon any man's shoulders than it did upon mine, because for eight years I have been in close communication with these colonies, and have been doing everything in my power—without, indeed, doing anything which could by any possibility injure my own people—to bring the mother country and these countries which I consider part of our common Empire into closer union of heart and of interest. . . .

I have known a great deal about business in my time, and I say I have never cared for a bargain in which I thought I had gained everything. I do not think that that is a lasting bargain. There must be something unfair about it, and no bargain is a good bargain which is not a bargain that is mutually satisfactory. I say there is room, and I shall prove it, in our situation, for a bargain between ourselves and our colonies which will be mutually beneficial, which is

likely to be permanently satisfactory. I believe that our negotiations will be conducted in a spirit of generous appreciation, and not in a spirit of petty haggling on either side. For myself, I deprecate any attempt to represent the interest of our colonies as hostile to the interests of our own country. I would not say here that something that was being done for Lancashire was, therefore, an injury to Yorkshire, or that something given to Warwickshire was, therefore, an injury to Worcestershire, and what Yorkshire, Lancashire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire are to this country, India, Australia, South Africa, and Canada are to the Empire. What benefits them benefits us. If you benefit any one of us you cannot help benefiting the whole. The whole depends upon the parts. You cannot have one of the parts diseased without the whole suffering. It is impossible to conceive any kind of bargain that can be made which will be to the advantage of any and which will not be ultimately to the advantage of all.

Now one word more. All my policy is to be considered, as I have myself represented, as a broad outline which will enable you to understand the kind of thing I have in my mind. It is not a cut-and-dried policy which cannot be altered in any detail. I am getting many letters, which say: 'You have said you would put an average tax of 10 per cent. on manufactures. I am in such and such a trade—the thimble trade, for instance; what tax do you propose to put upon thimbles?' My answer to all such inquiries as that is, 'You must wait till the negotiations begin.' What is going to happen if I am successful? If I carry the people of this country with me, and, above all, if I carry the working classes, the majority of the voters—well, what is going to happen is that the Government elected on this principle will immediately have a series of negotiations to undertake. It will have to negotiate with the colonies. For my part, I think it would not be bad if the then Secretary for the Colonies were to go to the colonies and negotiate on the spot. I have no right to complain of my experience, at any rate, for certainly the generosity

of the South African colonists was even more than I could have expected, and I never had, from first to last, the slightest difficulty in making a bargain with them. But not only have you to go to the colonies, but you have also to go to the foreign countries that are concerned. They must negotiate each a treaty of their own; and, lastly—and this, perhaps, is more important than all—if I had anything to do with such a thing, I would not consent to move a step without calling for the opinion of experts from every industry in the country. I know a good deal of business, but there are a good number of businesses about which I know nothing, and for me to pretend to say whether thimbles should be taxed more than anchors, or, on my own accord, and from my own small knowledge, to attempt to draw up a tariff, would be perfectly absurd.

Everybody interested—whether in thimbles, in anchors, or in anything else in the multiplicity of trades in this country—would, of course, be glad to assist any commission which was attempting to make a tariff. Their witnesses would be heard. Everything they had to say would be taken into account, and then, and then only, could we say in detail, and with absolute accuracy, what each article should pay, or what articles might be entirely relieved. I think you will see the reasonableness of that. At the same time you will feel that, while it is impossible for me without the greater influence which I can only gain by means of your goodwill and support—while it is impossible for me to deal with it in detail, yet I can make out a pretty good case in these broad outlines for a policy that would enable us to defend our home trade, and which would enable us to draw closer to our friends across the sea. In my opinion, the two great objects which I have in view—the prosperity of the home trade and the closer union of the Empire—are within our reach. We have again and again failed to take advantage of our opportunities. Think for a moment. When self-government was first given to the colonies, would it not have been possible then to have arranged all these matters so that we should not have been working one against

the other, but should all have been working on the same lines from the first? I think so. But, at any rate, that is a position which we did not take up, and which we now have no opportunity of recovering. In the period which has elapsed, what has been our treatment of our colonies? What has been the view taken here? Have not the colonies, when they have come here, found themselves neglected, the subject of no interest, the greatest possible ignorance being shown of the conditions under which they lived? When they have appealed to us we have told them their policy was nonsense, because it did not exactly accord with ours. We have told them that, if they did not like our views, the sooner they left the better. We have often promoted legislation with the distinct object, as stated by the statesmen concerned, of getting rid of them as early as possible. We have done all these things. Now at last we have come to our senses. We recognise their importance, and share to the full the sympathy and affection which they have shown to us. We cannot expect, however, that we can altogether escape the effects of our past neglect and apathy. Now, again, we have, as I say, an opportunity.

What is the alternative to the proposals which we make? Where do you find in any single speech which has been made on the other side a clear-cut policy which can be put against mine? No, the policy which is offered to you is *laissez-faire*, let matters alone. My judgment is that this country of ours has let things alone too long. We have been too ready to drift. Now the time has come once more, I hope under happier auspices, when I trust that we may be able to find a policy of our own, and have the courage to hold to it, and the generosity to bear the sacrifice, if any sacrifice be necessary, and when we may enjoy the success which we shall deserve if we maintain our convictions and give them practical effect.

TARIFF REFORM, TRADE UNIONISM, AND SHIPPING

LIVERPOOL, OCTOBER 27, 1903

[From a speech delivered at the invitation of the council and members of the Liverpool Unionist Working Men's Association.]

I AM especially pleased to think that I come here at the invitation of a great working men's association. What is my case? What are the arguments by which I support it? Well, my case is that the trade of this country as measured by the exports to foreign countries and to British possessions has during the past twenty or thirty years been practically stationary. . . . Whatever may be our losses now, our losses in the future are likely to be much greater if we continue our present system. Not only are the old causes continuing to exist, but new causes are coming in. . . . What is dumping? Dumping is the placing of the surplus of a home manufacture in a foreign country without reference to its original and normal cost. Dumping takes place when the country which adopts it has a production which is larger than its own demand. Not being able to dispose of its surplus at home, it dumps it somewhere else. Now the United Kingdom is the only country where this process can be carried on successfully, because we are the only country that keeps open ports. All the other great countries protect themselves against dumping by immediately putting on a tariff large or small to keep out these dumped articles. The peculiarity of the situation is that they are not sent in under conditions of fair competition. They are surplus stocks, which are being got rid of below cost price; and, just as you find a great surplus sale of some gigantic emporium may have the effect of ruining all the small shops in the neighbourhood, so the surplus of the products of all the producing countries in the world may very well ruin the trade of this country. Now a curious

thing which Mr. Asquith does not seem to appreciate—a curious thing to him, but not to us—is that ‘dumping’ only takes place seriously where the country that has recourse to it is in a state of depression. As long as any country is able to take up all its own supply for its own demand, it does so ; but when the time comes that trade is depressed, either in Germany or in the United States, or in any other country, then under our present system they do not do what we do under similar circumstances—they do not close their shops, blow out their furnaces, shut up their factories, but they go on making their full production at the lowest possible price, and they sell the surplus for what it will fetch in England. A very good policy for them, a very bad policy for us !

I propose, in the first place, to meet the foreigner with his own weapons. I propose to treat him as he does us, until he treats us better ; and I propose to treat our colonies better than we have hitherto treated them. I hope for something greater, in my opinion, even than increased trade, greater certainly than material prosperity. I hope to lay firm and deep the foundations for that Imperial Union which fills my heart when I look forward to the future of the world. We shall unite the British Empire not merely by a bond of blood and sympathy—that already exists—but by that bond of commercial unity which every one, to whatever party he may belong, every one who has studied this question, admits to be necessary if the union is to be permanent. . . .

Coming here at the invitation of a working-class association, I am going, as one principal part of my speech, to ask you to consider with me why the working man, and especially why trade unionists, should support my proposals. I want to guard against its being supposed for a moment that now or at any time I am going to appeal to any class interest or to any one class as against any other. If I am right, every class in the country will be benefited by reforms which will give increased work and increased employment to the poor, and I dare say increased profit to the capitalist. But

I am right to begin with the working class in the first place, because they are the most numerous. Now, why should you follow the advice which I tender to you ? In the first place, because, thank God, the working men are now, as they always have been, patriots, because they, to whom every additional expense counts for more than it does to other classes, yet always put first in their creed the welfare of the kingdom and the welfare of the Empire. It is not a selfish support which they tender to me, although their interest will be served by a patriotic policy. What is the whole problem as it affects the working classes of this country ? It is all contained in one word—employment. Cheap food, a higher standard of living, higher wages—all these things, important as they are, are contained in the word ‘employment.’ If this policy will give you more employment, all the others will be added unto you. If you lose your employment, all the others put together will not compensate you for that loss.

It is rather an interesting thing, which seems to me to have escaped altogether the attention of any of my opponents, who probably have not read the history of the Anti-Corn Law movement, that when Free Trade was carried, the working classes were neither represented nor consulted. I do not say that that makes Free Trade good or bad, but it is a fact that the movement was a manufacturers’ and a middle-class movement. The leaders of the movement, or some of the leaders of the movement, admitted that they thought it would enable wages to be kept at what they called a reasonable level. They thought that it would give cheap food, and that if the labourer had cheap food he could afford to work for lower wages, and that they, therefore, could afford to carry on a competition with which they were threatened in the goods they manufactured. And it is worth remembering that long after Free Trade was carried, even as late as 1888, Mr. Bright, in writing to a friend in America, and protesting against the doctrine of protection, points out to him that, if the Americans made protection their policy, they would have to give higher wages to their working classes—

higher wages and shorter hours. I do not think that that would be a disadvantage. But what I want to point out is that, rightly or wrongly, the leaders of the Free Trade movement believed that the big loaf meant lower wages. Then there is another thing. At the time of the Free Trade agitation, what was the action of the Radicals of those days ? The Radicals of those days were-represented by the Chartists. The Chartists were entirely opposed to the Free Trade movement. They said that they alone had the right to speak for the unrepresented classes, that Free Trade was a red herring drawn across the path of electoral reform, and they invited their followers to spurn and scorn the action of the Anti-Corn Law hypocrites. I do not think that was just. I do not think that the leaders of the Corn Law agitation were hypocrites at all. I believe they sincerely thought that what they were doing was for the good, not only of the manufacturers and middle classes, but also for the good of the working classes. But the interesting point is that at that time the working classes, who, as I say, had no parliamentary representation, declared, through their leaders, that the thing was only an attempt to draw a red herring across the path, that it was for the benefit of the manufacturers, but that it would not be for the advantage of the working man.

Fortunately, no condition of that kind can ever again occur in this country. The working classes are represented now, thanks very much to the efforts of one of the great Free Traders—my late friend and colleague, Mr. Bright. I am not certain whether Cobden ever took much interest in the movement for electoral reform ; but Mr. Bright made it one of the objects of his life—and it is largely due to the efforts of Mr. Bright, who went out in his time, as I am now doing, alone to speak for a policy in which he believed—it was largely due to Mr. Bright that the working classes have the franchise at the present moment. And what follows, gentlemen ? You have the franchise ; you have the majority of votes ; and you can say ‘ Yes ’ to this policy or you can crush it. The responsibility, therefore, is yours.

It no longer rests upon the minority. It does not rest upon the aristocracy or the House of Lords. It does not rest upon the middle classes. It rests upon the shoulders of the workmen. There is, indeed, still one responsibility which rests upon those of us who call ourselves statesmen. We have been, by your votes, selected for the position of leadership. It is the duty of a leader, if he has come to any conviction, to express that conviction as clearly and as plainly as he can to those who are indeed his masters, but who ought to listen to the leader whom they have chosen. It is his duty to do this, even though in doing it he may lose any little popularity that he may have gained, even though in doing it he puts an end to his political life. I have the satisfaction of thinking that in attempting to do this you will, at all events, recognise my good intentions. I have an idea that the working classes of this country are on this question more advanced than many of their leaders. If so, we shall win. I care not who is against us. The Cobden Club may rage furiously in all the languages of the civilised world. The 'Free Fooders' may imagine vain things—but we shall win the victory.

Ah ! but it is said, 'How can you expect to do that when the Trade Union Congress has passed a resolution against you ?' It is true that some of them have declared against us, but I recollect that there are many trusted leaders of the working men, both of trade unions and of other organisations, who do not share the views of the Trade Union Congress ; and therefore, great as is their authority, I humbly venture to appeal against them to you, to appeal against the officials to the men who appointed them and gave them their power. I say then, in the first place, that to me it is rather an extraordinary thing that these trade union officials, acting apparently on the instigation of the Cobden Club, have prepared a manifesto, circulated through the Cobden Club, against the proposals to which I am asking your attention. Why should they do it through the Cobden Club ? The Cobden Club was formed to honour the memory of a man whom we all know to have been a sincere man, whether he

was right, or wrong, and always deserving of the respect of his fellow-countrymen. Yes, he was all that ; but he was not a friend of trade unions, and now you have the trade unions in the arms of the Cobden Club. Mr. Cobden himself, speaking of trade unions in 1844, just before the reform of the Corn Laws, said : ‘ Depend upon it, nothing can be got by fraternising with trade unions. They are founded upon principles of brutal tyranny and monopoly. I would rather live under the Dey of Algiers than a trades committee.’ Surely to use a Club founded in memory of a gentleman who held those opinions is a strange thing for trade unionist leaders of to-day. But I want you to bear in mind that Mr. Cobden from his point of view—from the Free Trade point of view—was perfectly right.

I want you to bear in mind that it is absolutely impossible to reconcile Free Trade with trade unionism. You can have one or you can have the other, but you cannot have both ; and I am glad to say that in expressing this opinion I have the support of a trade unionist with whom I have disagreed upon almost every other question. Mr. Keir Hardie, speaking in the House of Commons, said : ‘ Free Trade in the abstract is all but an impossibility. There is no member of this House who supports trade unionism who can claim to be a consistent Free Trader.’ And then he goes on to say : ‘ Trade unionists of this country have no intention of allowing the sweating and underpaid labourers of continental nations to enter into competition with them.’ Is that your opinion ? Well, they are brave words. You will not allow it ? Then you will not be Free Traders. There is no getting out of the dilemma. The gentlemen who oppose me because they say I am a Protectionist, and who then go down to the House of Commons, and in order to catch working-men votes in Radical constituencies, declare themselves supporters of the prevention of alien immigration and the prohibition of prison-made goods, of shorter hours, and so on, are inconsistent. The Trade Union Congress was not always of the opinion of the Congress that met this year. In 1888 the Parliamentary Committee offered a report, in

which it said this : ' The demon of cheapness '—the present Trades Congress makes a god of cheapness ; the Parliamentary Committee in 1888 spoke of it as a demon—' the demon of cheapness has pervaded our whole social system, and while the cheapness of goods has been a matter of wonder, purchasers seldom or never give a thought to the human blood and muscle that have been ground up in the production of the article.' That is admirable, and if I had time I could preach a sermon from it, and I think it would be well to preach that sermon before the present Trades Congress. My first point, therefore, is this—that it is not only the consumer you have got to consider. The producer is of still more importance ; and to buy in the cheapest market is not the sole duty of man, and it is not in the best interest of the working classes.

Now what are the legitimate objects of trade unionism ? In my opinion there are five. In the first place, to enable working men by union and combination among themselves to meet employers on equal terms and to bargain with them. If there were no trade unions and no combination capital would be too strong. Labour would be at the mercy of capital, and it is to prevent that, among other things, that trade unions were founded. Then the next object is to secure the highest wages which are consistent with the conditions of each trade—to raise the standard of living and to prevent unfair competition—to insist on proper precautions for the health and safety of those employed ; and, lastly, to provide for those of their comrades who, owing to temporary illness or misfortune, are deprived of their means of livelihood. Those are legitimate objects, in my judgment, and I heartily approve of them, although I have not always been able to approve of all the methods by which they have been sought to be obtained. But one thing is certain. While we have done much to secure these objects, while the mass of the people, to whatever class they belong, have sympathised with them and have passed legislation such as the Factory Acts, the Mines Acts, the Truck Acts, the Compensation to Workmen Acts, the Fair

Wages Clauses, the Prohibition of Prison Goods, and a number of other minor Acts of the same kind, every one of these measures is opposed to the strict doctrine of Free Trade. Free Trade says you are to buy in the cheapest market. Free Trade says you are not to interfere with the freedom of independent men, not to prescribe to an employer what he shall or shall not do, but to leave him free to bargain as he likes with his workpeople, and, on the other hand, you are not to make combinations which tend in the slightest degree to destroy the liberty of the workman to sell his labour just as low or just as high as he pleases. Those are the doctrines of Free Trade ; and all these doctrines we have put aside now for twenty years in our endeavour to benefit the condition of the working men and to raise the standard of living. Is it not a little too much now to come down and tell me that I am a heretic, that I ought to be put out of the congregation, forsooth, because I will not allow to be sacred and inspired the doctrines that those who accuse me have abandoned long ago ? But there is another most important point which I want working people to consider. Grant all this legislation, and much more of the same kind, I warn you it will be absolutely futile unless you are prepared to go farther. What is the good, I ask, in the name of common sense, of prohibiting sweating in this country, if you allow sweated goods to come in from foreign countries ? If you insist on limitation of hours, and upon precautions for security, bear in mind that all these things add to the cost of production, to the difficulties of the manufacturer in selling his goods, and unless you give him some increased price, some increased advantage in compensation, then he cannot carry on competition any longer. All these conditions in the long run will result not to your advantage, for you will have no work to do, but to the advantage of the foreigner, who is not so scrupulous, and who conducts his work without any of these conditions. ' I say, then, that if it were possible to calculate exactly what these precautions cost over and above similar precautions taken in the other countries with which we are competing, we should be

justified, without the slightest infraction of the true principles of Free Trade, in putting on a duty corresponding to that cost.

Again, take the case of the Fair Wages Clause. I saw the other day that in the regulations of the London County Council it is provided that the wages and hours to be paid by contractors under their contracts are to be such as are current and recognised by the trade of the district. Very good ; I am making no objection. I believe similar regulations exist in all the Government departments. But these regulations do not apply to goods which are brought in by foreigners ; and what is the result ? The other day Vauxhall Bridge was to be rebuilt. The Committee which dealt with the matter recommended, as I am informed, to the London County Council that only British material should be used. Surely that was fair—that is to say, if you will impose on British manufacturers all these conditions, you must either impose the same conditions on foreigners, or you must say you will not buy foreign goods. But the recommendation of the Committee was rejected by the County Council ; and I am told that two labour members voted against the recommendation of the Committee, and that accordingly, while requiring all these conditions for British contractors, the contract is thrown open to foreigners if they choose to compete. I do not know, I have not been informed in regard to the particular contract, who took it ; but I have been told that £41,000 worth on one account, and perhaps more on others, of tram rails were bought by the London County Council from Belgium. Now will you please follow that up ? I am not blaming the London County Council ; they considered that they had only got to look in the narrowest way to the interests of those whom they represent, and accordingly they bought in the cheapest market, according to the Cobden Club maxim. Now, how much did they save on that £41,000 ? I understand that they claim to have saved £8000. Yes, and how much did their country lose ? To make that £41,000 worth of rails £20,000 of wages were wanted, and where did they go to ?

They went to Belgium, and they might have been spent in this country. That is being done all over the country, and if I wished I could give you plenty of instances. In every case the gain is small, but the loss, if you look at the country as a whole, is very great. Now, look at this thing in another way. You are to buy everything in the cheapest market. On what ground do you say that we should not buy our labour in the cheapest market? Everybody knows that there are countries—I will not name them—in which labour is very much cheaper than it is here. Why should we not import labour from them to any extent? I am one of those who for many years have voted and spoken in favour of the regulation of alien immigration. I do not want to prevent it altogether, but I want a man who comes practically a pauper to these shores to show that he can be, and will be, a useful and a profitable citizen. I would like, therefore, to apply tests to those who come, but how can I do so? With what reason, with what sense could I make a law and restrictions if while I keep out the labourer I let in his goods, if I allow the man who makes slop clothing or whatever it may be, at starvation prices, if I keep him from working in Shoreditch, but allow him to work at some other place, which, again, I will not name, and thence send to me the goods which he has made at these ridiculous prices? Now, what is the conclusion of this branch of the matter? If protected labour is good, and I think in many ways it is—that is to say, the fair protection of labour—then it is good to protect the results of labour; and you cannot do the one without the other, or else in trying to do good to labour you will do it much more harm than good. And if it be good, as I think it is, to support the object of trade unionism, then, I say, those objects can only be secured, can only be permanent in our system as long as we can offer to the bulk of our workpeople, to all those who are willing to work, constant and remunerative employment. As long as we have got large numbers of people who would work if they could, but cannot find work to do, so long it is useless to talk of raising wages or restricting the hours of labour, or putting on to

manufacturers additional cost which they cannot afford to pay. The only result will be that you will still further lessen the amount of your employment. Now I hope to give you more employment. I hope to do so by keeping, in the first place, a firmer hold upon home markets ; I hope, in the second place, to do so by having something to bargain with when we trade with the foreigner ; and I hope, in the last place, to do so by encouraging the best of our trades, the trade which is most profitable to us in proportion to its size, the trade which is increasing most quickly, the trade which we have it in our power to stimulate most greatly—I mean the trade with our own kith and kin across the seas.

Now I turn to a different subject. Industry in Liverpool, as industry in many other great cities of the Empire, is more or less specialised ; and there is no industry which is probably so important to you as the great shipping industry of which Liverpool is practically the centre. Liverpool boasts itself to be the sea-carrier and the merchant of the world. I tell those who are concerned in this great industry—I will not do you the injustice of supposing you are not capable of as much patriotism or of as much self-sacrifice as the working class of whom I have previously spoken—but I tell you as I have told them : ‘ You will benefit by this policy. You cannot lose by it.’ Now I am going farther. I will say that if this great industry were seriously endangered by my proposals I should think that not only would the shipowners be justified, but that they were bound by patriotism to resist it, because what is our shipping industry ? Our shipping industry is one of the very greatest of our exports. It does not show in the figures, but we know it exists, although I doubt myself whether it is so large as some of our statisticians appear to think. Bear in mind that, whether it be £50,000,000 or £90,000,000, as some suppose it to be, the only part of it with which we are concerned, and which we can call British exports, is the part that employs British subjects. What is paid to the alien seaman or what is paid in the purchase of alien goods abroad, these are in the nature of imports into this country and not

exports out of it. But whatever may be the actual facts, and they are very difficult to ascertain, I admit as fully as any one the importance of this trade, and I desire as much as any one to increase its prosperity. What is the case? It is very admirably stated, I think, in a little pamphlet which has been sent to me, written by one of your townsmen in a very moderate way, by Mr. Norman Hill. What does he say? He points out the enormous progress which this industry has made in recent years; he says that even now it is still larger than any other merchant navy in the world; he says it is still increasing in amount, and I hope, and I think he hopes, that it is still profitable to those who are concerned in it. I do not pretend to criticise his figures. I am not going to dispute them. It is not necessary for my purpose. I am going to admit every one of those statements and every one of the figures on which they are based; only I would like to point out to Mr. Hill what indeed he would recognise himself, that these things tell only half the truth. They tell what is your position positively, but they take no note of comparative progress, and it is only by comparative progress and not by actual progress that you can foresee the future. It is not what we have now, but the question is, How long shall we keep it? And how much shall we keep of it? We are like a man in a race. He starts with a great advantage; he has been given a hundred yards, perhaps. In the first lap he loses thirty; in the second lap he loses fifty more; and then he is seen by an observer from the Cobden Club, and the Cobden Club says, 'That is my man; he is still ahead.' I think we know better.

My case is that British shipping, admirable as its condition is in many respects, is not progressing so fast as foreign shipping, and I do not like that symptom at all. I must trouble you with a few figures as an illustration of what I am saying. I take these figures from some admirable articles which appeared in the *Times* newspaper, and which were written in a most impartial tone. According to them, British tonnage entered and cleared in foreign ports increased 20,000,000 in ten years—1890 to 1900—but foreign

shipping in the same period, and in the same ports, increased 80,000,000—four times as much, and, what is more interesting to be observed, the increase was chiefly in the later years. That is to say, not only is the movement going on, but it is going on in an accelerated ratio. Now then, take foreign tonnage into the United Kingdom from 1890 to 1902. It increased about 15,000,000, and the British trade in our own country in the same period only increased a little more than 12,000,000—that is to say, increased less than the foreign. We are losing both ways. We are losing at home, we are losing abroad. Then again—and it is curious how similar the facts are, whether you look to shipping or any other trade in the whole category of the trades of the United Kingdom—it is curious to observe that the portion of the trade which is thoroughly satisfactory is the colonial trade, the trade with our foreign possessions, and that has doubled, I believe, in the period of which I am speaking. Now take two other facts from another source—this is from the *Newcastle Chronicle*—the tonnage built in the United Kingdom in 1902—that is, last year—was an increase in the year of 591,000 tons over 1893, but the tonnage built abroad by foreign nations and our colonies, of course chiefly by foreign nations, increased by 885,000 tons, that is to say, the building was 294,000 tons more abroad than it was at home in a single year—the increase, I mean, not the total building. Then there are the last figures. They are worth consideration. This comes from the Blue-book. From 1890 to 1901 we are told that the total increase in the tonnage of the whole British Empire was 1,400,000 tons, and meanwhile the total increase in foreign tonnage was 2,200,000 tons, or 800,000 tons more than the British tonnage. I think serious people ought to give serious consideration to what, at any rate, are signs. What is the use of saying that the house is still standing if you know that there is rot in the foundations? What is the use of saying we are doing very well when you know you are doing comparatively worse every year? What is the good of talking about your income-tax returns or profit or the length of your voyages, when you

know that behind you have galloping up at a greater rate than anything you can reach your bitterest and severest competitors and rivals ?

What is the cause of all this ? I will tell you on the authority of Mr. Asquith. He says it is want of intelligence: It is want of capacity, it is want of enterprise. Now, if there be in the whole of this country any trade or trades of which such a statement is untrue, it is our great shipping industry and our great shipbuilding industry. I am not here to say that all our methods are perfect. I should not have been the founder and chancellor of a great university if I had not felt that we stood in need of improvement ; and I shall be very glad of Mr. Asquith's assistance in establishing Charlottenburg schools in every city in the Empire, in order to give advantages which at present we do not enjoy. But when we have done all that, I say we should not even then increase greatly the skill and the industry and the talent and knowledge of the men who control these two great trades, and that it is not in that direction that we shall find explanation for the evils to which I have called your attention.

What is the explanation ? In the first place, there are bounties and subsidies. How do you think that any man can stand against the kind of bounties, direct and indirect, with which a shipowner finds his path crossed in so many directions ? You will find the whole account fully told in the parliamentary report which deals with this subject. When I was travelling the other day, I had a little experience which seems to me to be worth relating. I was at Zanzibar, on the east coast of Africa, and I was told that the Germans were making great progress in their trade with East Africa. I said to the merchants whom I saw there—most of them English—‘ How is this ? Is it that we are so far behind the Germans that you cannot buy our goods any longer ? ’ And they said, ‘ No, it is not that. Your manufactures, perhaps, may in some respects be improved, but the real reason is that the Germans have got an excellent line of steamers ’—subsidised, I think, with £80,000 a year—‘ whereas we have only got an inconvenient and unsatis-

factory line with a miserable subsidy of £6000 or £7000 a year, and the German steamers bring German goods, and the trade follows the flag.' The trade of East Africa may not be a very large one, but the instance, at all events, is worth quoting as an instance of what is going on elsewhere.

We have made sacrifices in many quarters of the globe, in none more than in that which I recently visited. And now who is to have the advantages of them? Are they to be taken from us by bounties given to foreign shipping? Are foreign governments to be allowed to induce a foreign trade which would not otherwise naturally belong to their countries?

Then, again, look at the disabilities to which British ships are exposed. We put upon them all sorts of regulations—right regulations, mind you—I am myself the author of some of them. We require a load-line for them; we require other precautions. Why? For the health and safety of those who go down to the sea in ships. While I say that is right, what do we do with the foreigner? We do not require any load-line from him. It is possible, I am told, for an English ship in your port here of Liverpool to load up to, say, 3500 tons, and then to have an inspector come on board and say, 'This won't do; this is above your mark—below your mark, I suppose I ought to say—you must pull out 500 tons at once'; and then that steamer goes away with 3000 tons of cargo. The next day, as I am told, a foreign ship may come in not marked at all, and may load up its 3500 tons; and the 500 tons may make all the difference between profit and loss, and we allow him to have every one of the privileges which we give to the other ships. These things want discussing. I have been told to-night, since I came here, of another disadvantage. You have to register tonnage, and the foreigner has a different register. Your vessel is registered perhaps at 1500 tons, and the foreigner, who has precisely the same cargo-carrying capacity, is registered at 1000 tons; and he pays dues of every kind upon 500 tons less than you. Is that the way to keep your trade? What I am pleading for is scientific treatment of trade subjects,

not this—Pshaw! it makes me despair sometimes—not this feeble and futile policy of official incapacity or official apathy, which makes it either below the dignity or below the duty of a British Government to take care of British trade. I am coming to an end, but I have one more word.

What about the exclusion by certain foreign countries of British trade from what is called the ‘coasting trade’? And what about the definition of ‘coasting trade,’ which makes a voyage from Riga, in the Baltic, to Vladivostock, in Siberia, a coasting voyage, or from Portland, Maine, to San Francisco, on the Californian coast, a coasting voyage? And yet these are voyages which no British ships may undertake, while, on the other hand, a foreign ship can come in here at Liverpool, may travel all round the coast, calling at every port as it goes, or it may go from here to the farthest end of the earth where the British flag flies, and in no circumstances will it be placed at any disadvantage with regard to us. Let us see how this works. A few years ago we had a growing trade with Madagascar. Madagascar becomes a French colony. We thought honestly that we had a clear and distinct and unmistakable arrangement with the French that they would not interfere in any way with our liberty and with the existing conditions of trade with Madagascar. The French thought otherwise. They have excluded us altogether from that trade. It has gone, with all its possibilities of extension; and so much for the trade. How long do you think that the French, who now do that trade, are going to allow your shipowners to carry it in British ships? Not one moment longer than they can prevent. Your trade there is doomed. It may not be gone yet, but is that a reason why you should not bestir yourselves in order to keep it? Rest assured, if you do not take note of the warning that is written on the wall, the trade will go, and you will never be able to recover it.

We will take another case, a more important case—that of Cuba. Cuba is a great island only requiring the good government which it now has under American protection to make it one of the richest countries in the world. The

United States have undertaken obligations with regard to Cuba, and they claim corresponding privileges, but our idea was that our conditions of trade with Cuba would be respected. They have not been respected. Perhaps the Americans did not understand them in the same sense as we do. Be that as it may, all representations by us have been fruitless, and the American Government proposes preferential arrangements with Cuba, treating Cuba exactly as I want you to treat our colony of Canada. They propose to make a preferential treaty with Cuba, the result of which will be that no more English goods will go to Cuba, and all the traffic between Cuba and the United States will be done in United States ships. And not merely that. See how these things begin ; see how these things end. I am told that a large trade is done between Rangoon and Cuba in Indian rice, and that is now done by British ships ; but the result will be that rice will go to New York, and from there to Cuba in American ships ; and once more a portion of your trade has been snipped off, and, because you have gained somewhere else, you will have the Cobden Club still holding high its flag and saying, ' See how great is our trade ; see what a magnificent people we are ; and see what losses we can sustain without complaining ! '

I say that in this matter of shipping something should be done. Our colonial premiers on the last occasion, among other resolutions besides the one asking us for preference, passed a resolution asking the British Government to consider the conditions under which the coasting trade as between ourselves and our colonies is carried on ; and the premier of New Zealand has already, I believe, proposed a law to his own parliament in which he recommends that the same treatment should be measured to a foreign country that they measured to the British Empire. Where they keep their coasting trade to themselves, New Zealand and the mother country should keep their coasting trade to themselves. These matters are not matters to be hastily settled. I am not asking you to accept them ; I am only putting the case before you. I say there must be a remedy

—there must be some way of bargaining with these gentlemen to get rid of these unfair restrictions. And it is for that power of bargaining, and, if necessary, of retaliation, that Mr. Balfour has asked, and that I have asked. And, after all, if there be any difference between us whatsoever, it is only that I go farther than he does and that I ask, not in the future, but to-day, for the preference to our colonies which will bind them and us together.

I have made clear to you, at any rate, what I think would be the effect of my policy upon your great shipping industry. I think it would encourage and stimulate our colonial trade, which is already the most progressive and the most profitable, and by thus stimulating our relations with the colonies we shall be able to give to the shipowner a return freight in such cases as Canada and Australia. Surely there would be an enormous advantage both to him and to us. I think he would increase his trade with the colonies, but I see absolutely no reason whatever to believe that he would decrease his trade with other countries. Why should he? Name to me one single Protectionist country which at the same time that it has built up its own markets has not been able to increase its foreign exports. If that be so, we shall be able, at the same time that we hold our own market, to increase our trade with the foreigners, and the only change which I anticipate—and it is a change which I greatly desire—is that the character of the cargoes may be somewhat altered. I want to see less of their finished manufactures coming in, and I want to see more of their goods—raw materials and things of that kind—in return for our exports of finished manufactures.

I have gone into some detail in these matters, but, after all, I have not wandered from my subject. You may take any detail. I can follow any trade however small, or any trade however large, or any class however small, or any class however large, as I have followed to-night one great class and one great industry, and the result will always be the same. And, over and above any elaborate attempt to prove what seems to me hardly requiring proof at all—

that your interests will be served by the change which I have undertaken to recommend to you—over and above these, I appeal to those solemn considerations of Imperial sentiment and national patriotism for which the city of Liverpool has always been distinguished. What is your motto? ‘Ships, colonies, and commerce.’ You are right to place colonies in a prominent position. You are right to place it between the other two, for the other two depend upon it, and as long as we keep our colonies we have nothing to fear for the future. I have not endeavoured, although I have been represented as doing so, to prove that the refusal of my proposals will be followed by any immediate result. I do not know whether it will or whether it will not. But I look to the future, as every statesman should, and I say that, if you continue your present system, and if, above all, you leave your colonies, now loyal and devoted to you, to seek for reciprocity in other quarters, a reciprocity which others will be ready to give, but which you, forsooth, I am told, will emphatically refuse, then I predict that sooner or later this great Empire of our dreams will vanish away and will leave not a wrack behind.

Remember, the experiment has been tried. Holland tried in the time of her greatest prosperity to retain her command of the sea, her position as carrier and merchant of the world. She tried to maintain it without productive capacity. She tried and failed, and you, gentlemen, cannot be more successful than she was. Remember that the principle, the underlying principle, of Cobdenism was cosmopolitanism. It was to care for all the world, avoiding, and even despising, the special care for which I plead—the care for those who are nearest and dearest to us.

Even at this moment one of the most strenuous advocates in the press of the views which I oppose declared the other day that the great issue between us was no mere party question, but it was a conflict between Imperialism and Little Englandism. Yes, he is right. He is a Little Englander. I am an Imperialist, and the conflict is between us. This is now to me the urgent and the present issue. You are

called upon in this generation to a greater responsibility than ever before. It is on your decision that this tremendous issue rests. The balance hangs, but I know what your forefathers would have said. I know what they did. I know how they endured burdens and sufferings to which our sacrifices, if indeed sacrifices there be, are as nothing but as a drop in the ocean ; and I know how, with half our population, with one-tenth of our wealth, with Ireland hostile, under conditions of which we have no conception, they nevertheless, and at times almost alone against the world, bore themselves bravely in the titanic strife with Napoleon and came out victorious. What is our task to theirs ? It is a mere trifle ; it is only for us to keep the fruits of the victory that they have won. I commend this issue to your consideration, and if indeed we are called upon to give up some antiquated and nevertheless dearly beloved prejudice or superstition, if indeed we are called upon for more than that, let us show that prosperity has not corrupted our blood—that it has not weakened our nerve or destroyed our fibre.

THE QUESTION OF EMPLOYMENT

LIVERPOOL, OCTOBER 28, 1903

... For good or for evil, for better or for worse, this question is going to touch you all. There is not a man, whether he is a Radical, or whether he is a Liberal, or whether he is a Liberal-Imperialist, or a Free Fooder, or a Free Trader, or whether he is a Conservative or a Tory or a Liberal Unionist—and I might go on for five minutes more—to whom it is not a matter of the greatest importance to find the solution of the problem which I have brought before you. I must repeat once more to you that it matters more to you, to the working classes, whose representatives I am addressing, than it does to any other class, because it is a question of employment. I am not exactly an idle man myself, but my employment is not life and death to me, and it is to you. And therefore I can

never, even at the risk of being monotonous, address any meeting in which working men predominate without telling them that they should address themselves mainly and chiefly to the question whether or not the proposals which I make to them will increase their employment. Of one thing I am quite certain, and that is, that if nothing is done their employment will decrease, and the effects of that upon your homes, upon your wages, upon your comforts, upon the standard of living, all that you value—you yourselves are even better able to judge than I.

Now, I often think that the economists who deal with this question, the gentlemen who treat of the science of wealth, forget altogether the difference between wealth and welfare. It is quite possible to be rich and not happy. That is possible for the individual, and it is equally possible for a nation; and it is conceivable that you might be taught scientifically how this nation can be made richer and at the same time you might leave out of account the fact that in becoming richer it would become worse and less happy. It is often said: 'The foreigners who are protective countries; and whose example you wish us to follow, their working men are less well off than ours.' I have two things to say about that. In the first place, I am not quite so certain of the fact as the political economists are who measure happiness by wealth. It is quite conceivable that the foreign workman might be earning less wages and yet might be getting more for his wages in one way or another than you do. But, putting that altogether aside, I believe that, at all events, the improvement as measured by wages has been, on the whole, greater in the case of the foreigner than it has been here. The improvement in the condition of some of the foreign workpeople, at any rate, has been more rapid than the improvement of the condition of the working people of this country; and I ask you, where will you find in any other civilised country in the world as much money spent on pauperism in proportion as there is here?

I think we cannot properly measure the present position of the working classes of this country by the sort of returns

which the political economists provide for us, and which deal only with the highest class of workman. They never deal with the amount of employment which each working man has. They deal with the average rate of wages, which is quite a different thing. I was told the other day that the wages of dock labourers in Liverpool are fair wages. Yes, that may be, but does the dock labourer in Liverpool always get continuous employment? And if he does not get continuous employment, what does it matter how high the wages are? Suppose a dock labourer were paid 15s. a day, everybody would say 'magnificent,' and that would appear on the returns and would raise the average of wages. And yet, if that dock labourer only had a Saturday morning's work in the week, he and his family would be living on 7s. 6d. a week. I am not, therefore, at all satisfied by these assurances that everything is going well with you. There is a great deal more that we have to learn and inquire into before we can say there is no possibility of further improvement; and no one can deny that if we can secure a greater demand for labour there would be fewer people unemployed, there would be more people of those who are employed who would have continuous work; and when the labour of the country was fully employed, then, as a matter of course, wages would rise, and wages would rise without doing harm to any one. That is the point. There are some people who try to persuade the working men of this country that the whole thing is a struggle between themselves and the capitalists, and that if they can only squeeze the capitalists a little more they will get more wages, and that it will only be the capitalists who will suffer. Now every one who has paid any attention to the condition of trade and industry knows that to be an absolute untruth. He knows that if you do not give the capitalist the reasonable profit that he has a right to anticipate, he will take his capital elsewhere, and in the long run the employment will go also. On the other hand, there is not a capitalist in this world who would not be happy to pay every workman he employs double his present wages if he could get the same average of profit for

himself. I say, then, that if you will follow my advice you may have more employment, and with more employment wages will tend to increase also.

There has been a statement made again and again, that, in saying this I am thinking only of the export trade, and that I take no note of the home trade, which is much more important. I have said exactly the opposite. I know perfectly well that the home trade of this country is five times at least as large as the export trade, and what I am pressing upon you as your first duty is to keep firm hold of the home trade. I say if you will do that you will have the export trade in addition. There is no earthly reason why the export trade should diminish, why it should not increase. But at present you are being hit in every part of your body. You are being hit in your foreign trade. That is being reduced, and you are being hit in the home trade too. What is the meaning, what is the result, I should rather say, of the facts that are pouring in upon us of industries that are gone, of industries that are going? If you can show me that when an industry has left this country it is because we can no longer, under any fair circumstances, compete with the foreigners—I should be sorry, but I might say, 'This is a natural course; we must bear with it.' But when I see these industries not leaving us because we are no longer capable of attending to them, but filched from us, stolen by unfair means, then I ask you, as I have asked working men in other parts of the country, How long are you going to take it lying down?

Let us see what is going on. In each neighbourhood I go to I inquire, and I am prepared to state the results of my inquiries, in order that they may be judged upon the spot, where people know much more about them than I do. I am told that within very recent years down to the present time a very considerable and important watch trade has been established at Prescott—I am told that at this moment, or within the last few months, an American salesman has come over here, it is said, with 17,000 or 20,000 watches, and that he is prepared to offer them at any price he can

get for them. Why does he do that? Because the great watch manufacturers in America have agreed together that they will not reduce their production, but that they will agree upon a home price that will satisfy the market there, and, having done that, they will go on making, keeping all their workmen at work, and if there is any surplus they will dump it in the only country which is magnanimous enough, generous enough, foolish enough, to allow it. Now, follow that out a little. Suppose that is taking place, what is going to happen? These watches are sold at any price below the cost at which the British working man could possibly make them, even if he accepts half wages. Meanwhile the Prescott works have to take lower prices and do what they can, and have to turn off workmen, and if that goes on long enough—it depends upon the good pleasure of our friends the Americans whether it does—if it goes on long enough, the Prescott works will close, the whole of their trade will be gone, and then those of you who have been buying in the cheapest market, and buying American watches, will find out that they have created a monopoly for the benefit of the Americans, and they will have to pay through the nose for their watches. There will be only one place from which you can get them. When there is no longer any home competition, when you are dependent absolutely upon the prices that the American factory chooses to fix, you will not gain in the long run. But at the same time I do not blame any one as long as our present system is continued. I do not blame any one who buys his watches where he can, and provided he gets a good quality at lower prices. I blame the policy of this country which allows all this, which makes it possible. If the Prescott factory tries to send a watch into America, or if any English watch strays there somehow, what happens then? A duty of 45 per cent. is clapped upon it—half the value—yet all American or Swiss watches can come into this country absolutely free. Now that is a comparatively small trade, but it affects very much an interesting industry both here and in my own neighbourhood at Coventry.

Now, what about glass ? I am told that at the present time 240,000,000 of bottles are imported into this country. I think these come from Germany. Have Germans any special faculty for making bottles ? Have they something that we have not got ? If it were a case, for instance, where rice was sent into this country I should say, By all means do not put a duty upon it, because we cannot grow rice here, and we want to have our rice as cheap as possible. Is there any reason similar to that which affects the making of bottles ? That trade has been seriously injured, I will not say destroyed. Then there is plate-glass. It is a great industry at St. Helen's. It was also a very great industry in the immediate neighbourhood of Birmingham. I believe that all the plate-glass works, at all events all but one, have been closed. I have been told by a manufacturer in the trade that at one time the plate-glass industry employed 20,000 English workmen. Now that is all gone. But why ? The foreigners put duties upon plate-glass, varying but rising to the enormous duty of 60 per cent. Therefore there is no chance of our sending any plate-glass into other countries ; but there is nothing whatever to prevent them from arranging among themselves to charge a profitable price enough to cover the fixed expenditure on the sale of plate-glass in their own country and then send all the surplus into this country below cost price. There is one more case, and that is Warrington. It is the case of a Manchester industry also. I remember great wire-works at Manchester, and there are great wire-works in other parts of the country. But here is a most impressive contrast. Twenty-five years ago Warrington alone, one single town alone, exported more wire than the whole make of wire in Germany, and now Germany exports more wire than the whole make of England.

Our Free Importers say, 'What do you complain of ? You have cheap food. What do you complain of ?' They say, 'You have these things—this wire, this glass, these watches—you have them very cheap.' You say, 'But we have no money to buy them with.' I do not know what

they would say to that, except that it is the necessary result of the doctrine which they glory in supporting. Now, another answer which is made is, 'What does it matter? You have lost all those trades. You are losing others, but there is something that remains. The men who made watches are doing something else.' Yes, and what do they do? Here is a man who makes a watch. For that he requires a fineness of touch that often is hereditary, which can only be obtained after years of work, obtained only in youth and never obtained in after-life; and the moment the watch trade ceases, or does not continue to employ the same number of workpeople, this man, who has acquired the special gift that is worth much to himself and his family, has to throw it away, to destroy it. He has to go and act as a porter or a dock labourer, or to sweep the streets, and if afterwards we restore to him his trade he would be no longer able to take advantage of it. He is dropped into the ranks of casual employment, dropped down into the 13,000,000, be they more or be they less, who are always on the verge of hunger.¹ I say that the personal equation of suffering which all this transference of trade involves is the sort of thing which some political economists never think of at all, and the Cobden Club treats it as if it were of no consequence. It is, I say, of the utmost consequence. Even if it could be proved in the long run that the country did not suffer in wealth, that there had been a transfer from one trade to another, still I should say, when you count up the families that have been reduced to misery, all the heart-burnings, all the suffering that has been caused by these changes to the individual, when you think of the honest men who have gone to the workhouse and can never be brought back again to the ranks of continuous labour—when you think of all these things, then I say, even if the country were enriched its wealth would have been dearly purchased.

Now, I believe the working men of the country will have to think of these things, as they are brought home to them

¹ The estimate given by Sir H. Campbell Bannerman.

—and I say it with sorrow, but I say it with conviction, it is going to be brought home to them. The trade of this country always runs in cycles. We have had five or six years of exceptionally good trade, but the time is coming —I do not predict when, but it will come—when there will be a cycle of bad trade. Then the evils which I dread and fear will be accentuated in their influence upon the working classes of this country. There will be more imports from abroad in the shape of surplus production, more want of employment, and more misery of every kind. As these things come home to you, will you seize the earliest opportunity to alter the system under which this state of things is possible? Why should you be afraid? Suppose I am wrong; suppose that, in common with 99 out of 100 of the whole civilised world, I am wrong, and the pure Free Importers are right, still it is perfectly evident that the adoption of these proposals will not do you much harm, because these 99 out of the 100—those other countries, our German competitors, our French competitors, our Italian competitors, our Russian competitors, our Swedish competitors—are all doing very well. Therefore it cannot be an alteration such as I propose that will make the difference against us which the professors desire you to believe. If these countries can have a protectionist system infinitely more severe than anything I propose, more severe than anything that I think to be wise, and still progress, surely you need not be afraid of trying my prescription, which, after all, only involves, if it involves anything, this small transference of taxation from certain kinds of foods to certain other kinds of food, and this small protection against foreign manufactured goods, which I think can be justified entirely by the circumstances under which these goods are imported into this country.

I admit that sometimes I almost feel as if this were the weak point in my whole argument. I have to say to you—because I believe it to be true—that I ask you to make this change for your own good, as well as for the good of the Empire, and that you will not be called upon for any sac-

rice. I declare to you I wish I could say that you would be called upon for a sacrifice. I declare I would rather speak to you here and appeal to you as Englishmen, and ask you whether you are not willing to do what your fathers would have done, and what, in fact, they did do ; whether, for some great good in which, indeed, you might have no immediate personal interest, you would not be willing to make a sacrifice for great Imperial results. When we talk of Empire, and that is the satisfactory thing in this discussion, then we rise to a higher plane, then we are not thinking of ourselves, we are not thinking only whether a farthing here or a farthing there is a matter to us. We are thinking in the first place of our past, of the past of which we are proud and which we desire to continue ; we are thinking of our present in order that we need not be ashamed and may hold up our heads as sons of those who have gone before us ; and we are thinking of the future, and of our children, and our children's children, to whom we wish to leave unimpaired and intact the great inheritance which our fathers left to us.

· FREE TRADE AN ANTI-IMPERIAL POLICY

LIVERPOOL, OCTOBER 28, 1903

[From a speech delivered mainly in reply to the criticisms of Lord Goschen.]

... I HAVE a great respect for all those Chancellors of the Exchequer to whom I am referred. I have great respect for my friend Lord Goschen. But I appeal from them to one greater than all of them—I appeal from Sir Michael Hicks Beach, from Sir William Harcourt, and from Mr. Ritchie to one greater than all. I appeal to Mr. Gladstone himself. Many of you, always in politics opposed to him, and many of us, who at one time accepted him as our trusted leader, alike believe that, in his later years especially, he made great mistakes. None of us doubt

his capacity, his ability, his proud position as one of the most honourable, most able, most generous of British statesmen. I am not, I need scarcely say, going to claim Mr. Gladstone as one who would have been in favour, of the policy I am putting before you. I do not think there is any use in speculating as to what men who have gone from us would have done in new circumstances; but if I am asked, I think the high probability is that Mr. Gladstone would never have been able to detach himself from those ideas which he so long entertained and expressed in regard to Protection and Free Trade. I only appeal to him, therefore, as a great master of the underlying principles of finance. I will apply his principles as I please. I claim him as an authority upon the principles; and upon the principles, I say, he was entirely opposed to this new doctrine of taxation—that a tax is to be recognised as reasonable and wise when it does no good to any living soul and only so far as it brings money into the public Exchequer. Mr. Gladstone made a remarkable speech in introducing his Budget in 1860. I propose to read the whole quotation which bears upon this subject, because I think it is worth your careful attention. The whole subject and the circumstances of the time are also worthy of your attention.

Mr. Gladstone said: 'But I do not hesitate to say that it is a mistake to suppose that the best method of giving relief to the labouring classes is simply to operate upon the articles consumed by them. If you want to do them the *maximum* of good you should rather operate upon the articles which give them the *maximum* of employment.' He was speaking in 1860, fourteen years after 1846, when the anti-corn law legislation was passed. 'What is it,' he asked, 'that has brought about the great change in their position of late years? Not that you have legislated here and there, taking off 1d. or 2d. in the pound of some articles consumed by the labouring classes. It is that you have set more free the general course of trade. It is that you have put in action the process that gives them the widest

field and the highest rate of remuneration for their labour. Take the great change in the corn laws. It may even possibly be doubted whether up to this time you have given them cheaper bread. At best it is but a trifle cheaper than before.' This is a thing, I think, which will come as a surprise to many who take part in this discussion. I find gentlemen of great reputation speaking as if there was general distress because of the high price of bread before the corn laws were abolished, and that no sooner were the corn laws abolished, than by a stroke of the wand this distress was removed by the cheapening in the price of food. The great reduction in the price of food did not take place till long after 1860—long after the time when Mr. Gladstone was speaking. But let me keep before you the main question and continue the quotation. 'It may possibly be doubted whether up to this time you have given them cheaper bread. At best it is but a trifle cheaper than before. That change, however, is one comparatively immaterial, but you have created a regular and steady trade which may be stated at fifteen millions a year. By that trade you have created a corresponding demand for the commodities of which they are the producers, their labour being an essential and principal element in their production. It is the price their labour thus brings, not the price of cheapened commodities, that forms the main benefit received from your legislation. That is the principle of a sound political economy applicable to commercial legislation.' What were the circumstances under which this Budget was produced? Mr. Gladstone was asked to relieve the working classes by taking off the duties on sugar and tea, but he said it was his object—I am not now quoting his words—he said: 'No, I shall not benefit them much by that. You must use the money you have to dispose of in order to increase employment, in order to give them by their production the means of purchasing commodities they require.' He refused to take off the duties on sugar and tea. What did he do? In the first place, he took off the excise duty on paper, and it is most interesting to

read that part of his speech. I only read it again the other day when I made my speech at Glasgow, and I was curious to find almost the same language as to the country mills that might be supposed to be the producers of paper as I have used as to the country mills that I thought might in the future be grinding our corn, and as to our duty to do anything we could to keep the country people on the land, and not send them to crowd into the towns to compete with the artisan.

That was one use that was made of the money at his disposal; and the second use was this—to prepare for the deficit which he anticipated in consequence of the reciprocal treaty with France, a treaty in which we reduced our duties on French goods in order that she might reduce her duties on ours. I have been told that that was a reciprocal treaty, and not a preferential treaty. Well, it was both. It was a reciprocal treaty, that is admitted; but it was also a preferential treaty, in the sense that the articles upon which we reduced our duties were, many of them, articles which no other country made. When we reduced the duties on French claret and burgundy, how did that benefit the other countries to which we gave the most-favoured nation clause? The fact that it was not preferential in the full sense came up for discussion later, when I was a member of Mr. Gladstone's Government. When we tried to make a second treaty with France, after the old one had expired, what did the French say to this? They said: 'You have given, and continue to give, under your policy every advantage you offered to us to every other Power. You have now given all that you had to give, and you have given it to everybody. Under the circumstances, is it reasonable that we should make what we consider a sacrifice? You were pleased to give us this concession because you considered it to your advantage; we are very much obliged to you, but you have nothing more to offer us in return for the concessions you ask, and we therefore can give you nothing except the most-favoured-nation clause.' It may be in some cases an advantage to this

country, but the advantage of it has been grotesquely exaggerated; since all these treaties are made between countries who have their own interests to consider, who do not consider ours when they are negotiating treaties, and when they are completed they are often of no advantage to us. What, for instance, is the advantage of a most-favoured-nation clause in a treaty between Germany and Russia, in which Germany gives a reduction to Russia on articles we do not produce? I have said enough about the two propositions; and I wish to question both—the proposition that a tax put upon imports is necessarily borne by the consumer, and the proposition that it is the duty of the Government to ignore every consideration except the immediate interest of the Exchequer.

Now, I will come to what, after all, is the most important point in this discussion. At any rate, I should never have raised it, I should never have thrown myself into this controversy and all that it involves, if I had not been moved by my own personal experiences, by the responsibility which I felt I had towards the colonies whose relations with this country I administered so long. If I had not felt in connection with that experience and responsibility that the whole future of the Empire depended upon our being ready to review our policy, I should have left these fiscal questions, so far as they concern the immediate interests of the United Kingdom, to younger men, perhaps to my descendants. But it is because the two great objects to which my whole public life has been devoted, in the first place the amelioration of the condition of the working classes, and in the second place the union and the strengthening of the Empire, on which I believe our future depends—it is because both of these objects, and one of them especially, are at stake, that I have taken off my coat for a contest of this magnitude.

But in reference to this second and most important part, it is interesting to bear in mind what many had forgotten, I myself among the number, that the policy of the Free Traders was an anti-Imperial policy which I do not say all intended to carry into effect, but which coloured all that they

did. If you had said to Mr. Cobden, 'Your policy is very good, it may increase the prosperity of this country, but in the long run it would lose us our Empire, it would cause separation of the colonies,' what would Mr. Cobden have said? What did Mr. Cobden say? In Mr. Morley's *Life of Cobden* there is a quotation from Mr. Cobden's letter, which, in 1842, four years before the passing of the Corn Law legislation, he wrote to his brother. Mr. Cobden said: 'The colonial system, with all its dazzling appeals to the passions of the people, can never be got rid of'—got rid of? Is that the object of our policy?—'can never be got rid of except by the indirect processes of Free Trade, which will gradually, and imperceptibly, loosen the bonds which unite the colonies to us by a mistaken notion of self-interest.' When my attention was again called to this letter—no doubt I read it at the time that it first appeared—I was as much astonished as any of you could be. Is it not fair, is it not reasonable, that those of us who have thought that our Imperialism was quite consistent with Free Trade should now review our position when we find the leaders of Free Trade not only contemplating the possibility of this disruption of the Empire, but declaring as their private conviction, hope, and aspiration, that the policy of Free Trade would lead indirectly but certainly to this result?

Surely it is unnecessary for me now to argue this question. I will express my own feelings in two or three words. No one is prouder of England, Scotland, and the United Kingdom than I am. I can never read our past history without a thrill of emotion. We are not a perfect nation, we have done many bad things in our time—still, what grand things have been given us to do! What grand things we have done by the courage, the tenacity, and the determination of our race! We are a mere speck on the globe, but we have made ourselves, or have been made in the course of the designs of Providence, responsible for 450,000,000 of people. I do not believe that all that is meant to go for nothing. I do not believe that we have not, in securing this position, fulfilled the duty that was imposed upon us.

But what if the duty is too heavy for our shoulders ? And in my judgment, although the United Kingdom alone may yet have much to do, may yet take a great place amongst the kingdoms of the world, she cannot rival the empires that are springing up around her. We are venerable, we are old with honours and burdens beyond the average imposed upon us. We cannot look to a future equal to our past. Yes, we are old, but the Empire of which we are a part is new, and in that Empire we may find with our kinsmen and our children a future—a joint future—which we shall share with them, which will be greater than anything to which we can look back.

THE ANTI-CORN LAW AGITATION

BIRMINGHAM, NOVEMBER 4, 1903

I HAVE said that in the interval which has elapsed between our acceptance as a nation of Free Trade principles and the present time much has changed. Bear with me for a few minutes while I say something about the history of what is called the Anti-Corn Law agitation. It seems to me that this has been very much forgotten. Sixty years is a long time, memory plays strange tricks with us, and I am afraid that many of those who differ from me have not taken the trouble to read contemporaneous accounts, given not merely by Protectionists but by Free Traders themselves, in regard to this great movement. Now I ask you what is the view which has been placed before you by the opponents of any change. I want to state their case as fairly as I can, and I think this a fair statement of it. They have either represented to you, or they have led you to infer, that during the times of Protection this country was continually declining until it reached a state of unexampled misery and destitution. Not only in those days were people on the verge of starvation and misery, but—according to their theory—they were actually being starved. They have led

you to believe that this state of things was due wholly to the Corn Laws, to the high price of bread, and to Protection, and then they have led you to believe that when the Corn Laws were repealed everything changed as though by magic and at once there was cheap food for all people ; destitution no longer existed ; we entered on a time of great and universal prosperity, wholly due to the alteration of our fiscal system. I am afraid that that statement of the case has been accepted without inquiry by many persons. I have to say now that, if that is the case, it is a popular delusion. There is one answer to it—a general answer, which, I think, is conclusive. If it were true that Protection inevitably brought with it destitution and misery and starvation, and if Free Trade inevitably brought with it prosperity and progress, how do our opponents account for the fact that every foreign country without exception that has adopted Protection has—in recent years at any rate—progressed more rapidly and in greater proportion than we, the Free Trade country of the world ? I do not say that they have progressed in consequence of Protection, but I say that the argument of my opponents that Protection is necessarily ruinous—and that Free Trade necessarily implies prosperity—is absolutely disposed of by facts which are known to every man of you, which are known to every reasonable and impartial inquirer.

But, putting aside that general answer, I am going to deal with the matter from its historical aspect. Is it true that at the time when Free Trade was introduced and the Corn Laws were repealed we were in a state of destitution and misery and starvation ? Is it true that, under the protection which prevailed before, this country was going down in the scale of nations or losing its prosperity and losing its trade ? No, absolutely no. The exact reverse was the case. In the years preceding the repeal of the Corn Laws—and I will take especially the years from 1830 to 1841—there was a time of great prosperity in this country under Protection. I do not mean to say that the country was as rich or as great as it is now, but comparatively with

other nations it occupied a better position, was absolutely in the first rank. It had conquered, under Protection, the absolute commercial supremacy of the world, and although trade was less then than it is now it was increasing with a rapidity, a proportionate rapidity, which has seldom been exceeded since. But in 1841 we had in this country one of the crises which occur in every country from time to time, whether they be Protectionists, or whether they be Free Traders. We had a time of bad trade and small employment. It was not brought about by Protection. It was not brought about by the dear loaf, for in that period the loaf was much cheaper than it has been many times since the abolition of the Corn Laws. But it was brought about by circumstances which you will all understand. We had become the workshop of the world. We had been very prosperous. We were increasing our production rapidly. We outstripped the demands of the world. Foreign countries were in a poor condition. Their prosperity had been hindered by many causes into which I will not enter now, and they were unable to take the surplus of our production. Now so many of our mills and factories had to go on 'short time,' or were closed altogether, as you all have known in your own experience. There was great want of employment, which is the one critical thing in all this discussion. There was great destitution, great misery, and consequently great discontent on the part of the majority of the population. This was the time—in 1841 and 1842—to which Sir William Harcourt referred in his speech which was made on Saturday last. He went back to the memory of his youth, and said that at that time he was at school—I think at Preston—and had been, I understood him to say, a witness of riots in which some of the people had been shot down by the military. He went on to say that nothing of the sort had ever happened since. Well, sir, this is a very small matter, but I think his memory deceives him, because I think in later times—I believe, I have not had time to check it—I believe he was Home Secretary, people were shot down in a Midland mining district, and a special commission was appointed by the

Government to inquire into the circumstances.¹ But, after all, as I have said, that is really not relevant to the subject.

The point is that the riots in 1841 and 1842, to which our opponents refer, and which they apparently wish their audience to believe were due to the Corn Laws or due to Protection, were due to nothing of the kind. They were due to something absolutely different. They were instigated by the leaders of the Chartists in those days, and the Chartists of those days were absolutely opposed to the leaders of the Anti-Corn Law agitation. They had the greatest contempt for the leaders of that agitation. They did not spare them. The Chartist leaders at that time told the working people—and I am not certain that they were not right—that what they wanted, that the one thing that would deal with the circumstances of their conditions, was to secure sufficient representation according to their numbers, and they begged of them not to be drawn aside by the Free Trade agitation, which, they said, was a red herring to divert them from what was more important in their interests; and these riots and discontent were due to the action of the leaders of the Chartists, who urged the working men of this country to a universal strike, and they were directed not in favour of Free Trade, but against the Manchester manufacturers and others who were at that time the chief supporters of Free Trade. Somebody the other day said that that was not quite correct. I forget what objection he took to it, but I ask you to read the accounts given, not by me, not by a Protectionist, but by a Free Trader, a Free Trader who lived in those days, and was a friend of Mr. Cobden, who wrote a history of the Free Trade movement in which he believed, and who, therefore, is an irrefutable witness in a case of this kind. Mr. Moncrieff wrote the history of the Free Trade movement. Read what he said about the position of the Chartists.

You will find in Mr. Morley's *Life of Cobden* a quotation from Mr. Cobden, in which he said—I must be careful

¹ The Featherstone riots. Mr. Asquith was Home Secretary and Sir W. Harcourt Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time.

about the exact words—that the great body of intelligent mechanics stood aloof from the movement, and at the same time he admits frankly—he always was honourable and frank in all his discussions—he frankly admits it was a manufacturer's movement, and he says: 'I must confess that in the outset, at any rate, most of us thought that we had a distinct class interest in the matter.' That is to say, rightly or wrongly, the Free Trade movement was a manufacturers' movement, was not a working-class movement, and the leaders of the working classes of those days—rightly or wrongly—were opposed to the movement; they were in favour of something quite different, in favour of that electoral reform which in subsequent years the working classes have obtained. Now bear in mind, let me impress upon you what this argument is. It tends to show you that the distress of which you are often reminded, the distress of 1841, was not attributable to the Corn Laws, not attributable to the price of bread, was not attributable to Protection; it was due to other causes altogether. Here is a proof. In the years immediately following 1841 and 1842 everything changed. More employment was found, great prosperity prevailed. Now again, let me quote what was said in reference to the period immediately before the repeal of the Corn Laws. Mr. Mongredien says this: 'The adoption of Free Trade was not the result of pressure from adverse circumstances. This country was flourishing. Trade was prosperous. The revenue showed a surplus. Railways were being constructed with unexampled rapidity. The working classes were fully and remuneratively employed, and bread generally was cheaper than it had been for many years.' And yet Sir William Harcourt, trusting to his memory, tries to persuade you—to persuade the working classes of this country—that Free Trade was adopted because of the famine and the starvation which prevailed at that time. Now I go back to my history. In the autumn of that year, when things were so prosperous, a great calamity visited one part of the United Kingdom; the Irish people had been accustomed up to then to depend almost entirely for their

sustenance upon the potato. The potato famine came, and the crops were destroyed, the prices rose, and the most appalling misery was the result in Ireland ; and I have seen it stated that even millions of the population were on the verge of starvation. Gentlemen, it is clear that that must have had a great effect upon the statesmen of those days. That it must have impressed them with the necessity for relieving food from any exaggerated taxation, I can well understand ; but the potato famine was not the result of the Corn Laws, nor was the price of bread at the time of the potato famine the cause of their repeal or of the legislation which followed.

That was the autumn of 1845. I ask you now to consider these figures. I will not trouble you with many. In 1846, when things were at their worst, when the Irish famine had put the whole people of Ireland into a condition which was almost one of despair, what do you think happened with regard to the price of bread ? The price of wheat for the whole year of 1846 was 54s. 8d. per quarter, and after the repeal of the Corn Laws, which took place in that year, taking an average of ten years, the price of wheat was 55s. 4d. per quarter, or 8d. higher than it was during the year of 1846, when the repeal took place. Now, from all this I ask you to accept the statement which I make without fear of refutation, that it is a mistake to say either that dear bread was the cause of the repeal of the Corn Laws, or, secondly, that the repeal of the Corn Laws produced immediately any reduction in the price of bread. But I have something else to which I have to call your attention. It is true you have been told that after the repeal of the Corn Laws this country entered on a period—which lasted for five-and-twenty years—of what I may call unparalleled prosperity. I do not deny it, but I say that it had nothing to do with the repeal of the Corn Laws, and very little to do with the introduction of Free Trade. The cause of the prosperity was the discovery of gold in California and Australia, the development of inventions, the enormous increase of railway and steamship communication, the general impetus

and stimulus which was given to the trade of the world. Everybody prospered, and we prospered more than all. Why? Because under a system of Protection in the years of which I have spoken, before the repeal of the Corn Laws, we had secured a supremacy in the world's markets. Other countries of the world were backward, owing to various circumstances, and we alone were in a position to take advantage of this great boom, as we should call it now, of this great advance in the general dealings, the commercial dealings of the world. Now, gentlemen, I beg you to notice, before I pass on, that nothing that I have said is intended to show to you that it was wrong to adopt Free Trade at that time, and under the circumstances at which it was adopted. That is a different question altogether. But I want to prove to you, and I think I have proved it, that it was not Free Trade which made the loaf cheap, and it was not any cheapening of the loaf which made Free Trade necessary, but, on the contrary, as Mr. Mongredien tells us, Free Trade was adopted in this country because people were persuaded at that time, and I think rightly persuaded, that at the moment and under the circumstances it was the best economic policy for us to pursue.

Let us treat the present question in the same way; let us get rid of all this idea that Protection is immediately followed by starvation and destitution. That is absolutely untrue. Let us get rid of the idea that Free Trade necessarily brings prosperity. That is altogether untrue; but let us, as business men, as fair men, consider quietly whether, under existing circumstances, the policy of free imports which has taken the place of the policy of universal Free Trade is for us the best policy. It may be the best for us, and if so I do not pretend that the country will be ruined by its adoption. It may not be the best policy, and in that case, believe me, the country will not suffer for adopting a different policy. Now, then, I come to my next point. Here is one of the great changes which we have to recognise, which has altered the whole situation since Free Trade was adopted. Mr. Cobden based his whole argument upon the

assumption, which he made in all good faith, that if we adopted Free Trade it would mean free exchange between the nations of the world, that if we adopted Free Trade, five years, ten years would not pass without all other nations adopting a similar system.

That was his belief, and upon the promise, the prediction which he offered, the country adopted Free Trade. Unfortunately he was mistaken. He told the country of his day that what he wanted to do was to keep England as the workshop of the world. All the rest of the world was to be the wheat-field for England. I came across a passage in his speeches the other day which really, now that you think of what has actually happened, seems to be almost astounding. Mr. Cobden said that the United States of America, 'if Free Trade were adopted, would abandon their premature manufactures, that the workmen in their factories would go back to the land, and—now I am quoting his exact words—that they would 'dig, delve, and plough for us.' If that had been true, I doubt whether I should have been here to-night. But it was not true. The Americans have not so conceived their national destiny. They have not believed that they were created by Providence in order to dig, delve, and plough for us. They have thought that they had natural resources even greater than our own. They have thought that they could manufacture as well as we, and I am afraid that their ideas of the future have been much more correct than Mr. Cobden's. We have to deal with altogether different conditions. What happened when Free Trade was adopted in this country? Foreign countries, which, as I have said, were backward in those days, were not manufacturers. Their Governments put on tariffs against our manufacturers. It is quite possible that they may have suffered in the first instance. They thought of the future, of their children, of their country—all very good things to remember occasionally. What was the result? Behind the tariff wall they built up their industries virtually during the twenty-five years in which we were so prosperous under Free Trade—gradually they became more and more

manufacturing nations, gradually they got a firm hold on their own home markets. They kept us out, and they established the industries with which, not satisfied any longer with their own markets, they are now invading ours. I do not blame foreign countries, I do not appeal against their policy, but I ask you, as sensible men, are we really so conservative a nation that, while such a change has taken place in the whole conditions of our trade, we are still to say, 'We stick to our well-tried policy'?

Then another point, which, perhaps, is of even greater importance—at all events for the future—than the one to which I have referred. I want to call your attention to the change in the relations between this country and its colonies. I want to call your attention to the change in our political relations, to the change in our commercial relations. Take the commercial relations first. When I was at Glasgow the other day I pointed out that there had been a decline in our trade, in the exports of our manufactures to the foreign protected countries. I pointed out that our trade with the neutral countries—which, although they have tariffs, have no industries, and therefore are not protected in the true sense of the word—that our trade with those countries had remained stationary. And I pointed out that our trade in our colonies had increased by leaps and bounds, so that it had concealed the deficiency in our foreign trade. Well, I have seen no answer to this. My figures have been questioned—not that it has ever been denied that the figures in themselves were correct, but it has been suggested that other figures might be produced which would tell a different tale. I am not going into figures to-night, but I defy my opponents to produce any figures which are relevant to this statement, and which will in any way refute it. It is quite true that they have produced volumes of statistics. I must paraphrase the remark of Sir William Harcourt about them, and I must say, 'Where they are true they are irrelevant, and where they are relevant they are not true.' But I dare say I shall have an opportunity in one form or another of dealing with those statistics. Meanwhile I only tell you the result

of my examination, and my conclusion is this—whether your trade is prosperous at the present time, or whether it is not, its continuance depends essentially and mainly upon the continuance and even upon the increase of your trade with your colonies. If that trade declines, if it does not increase, then I do not care what may be the truth as to the comparative figures dealing with our foreign trade, but I say there will not be sufficient employment for our population, and very likely we shall have to meet a crisis even greater than that which our ancestors had to contend with in 1841. It is then our interest at the present time—I am dealing with interests—it is to our interest to stimulate the prosperity and the progress of our colonies quite independently of any affection that we may have for them, quite independently of any gratitude that we may owe to them. It is to the interest of every one of us, and, above all, of every workman, to preserve with them our trade relations, to increase and to improve them. And if we give them a preference, they will reciprocate. If we take more from them, they will take more from us.

There is one point which I do not think I have dealt with before, but it is one of great importance. It is this, that every year from our surplus population we send some of our best, of our youngest, of our most energetic—we send them abroad to seek their fortunes in other climes. Where do they go? They go for the most part under a foreign flag. They or their descendants break the connection. Being no longer under the shelter of the Union Jack, they no longer share our Imperial sentiment. I hope that they remain friendly, but they are no longer to be counted amongst our supporters, amongst those who with us maintain the mighty edifice, the responsibility for which has been thrown upon us. I am afraid I have been led into sentiment. Now I go back to interest. Every emigrant from this country who goes, let us say, to America—what is he? A prospective customer of yours to the extent of 6s. If he goes to Canada he takes £2; if he goes to Australia he takes £5 or £6; if he goes to South Africa he takes more. Is not that worth considering?

Then this brings me to another change. In 1846 our position with regard to the colonies was very different. The policy of the leaders of the Free Trade agitation was different. Again I ask you—if circumstances have changed, are we so stupid that we cannot change to meet them? The leaders of the Free Trade agitation were not exactly enthusiastic about Imperial union. I quoted the other day at Newcastle a letter from Mr. Cobden, in which he distinctly said that he thought that one result of Free Trade would be gradually and imperceptibly to loosen the bonds which united us to the colonies—and I said that nowadays we do not want to loosen those bonds, and accordingly, that if our policy tended in that direction we must change that policy. To-day I have seen a letter in the *Times* from a gentleman whom I will not name, and whom I do not know, who politely tells me that that is an untruth. That is an illustration of the way in which our opponents carry on the controversy. I will not follow them. The letter of Mr. Cobden speaks for itself. But if that is not enough I will give them another. Here is what Mr. Cobden said in speaking of our relations with Canada. He said: ‘In my opinion it is for the interests of both’—that is, of this country and of Canada—‘it is for the interests of both that we should as speedily as possible sever the political thread by which we are as communities connected, and leave the individuals on both sides to cultivate the relations of commerce and friendly intercourse as with other nations. I have felt an interest in this confederation scheme because I thought it was a step in the direction of an amicable separation.’ Mr. Cobden did not stand alone in those times. It was not merely the view of the leaders of the Free Trade movement, but there was a large party in this country who regarded the colonies as a costly encumbrance, and who gave them self-government not with the hope that thereby we should draw them closer to us, but with the hope that they would take the reins into their own hands and become separate nations. I am not going to argue whether they were right or wrong. That question has been settled; but if that was the idea that

prevailed in 1846 in regard to the Empire, in regard to our relations with our kinsmen abroad, now that we have changed the idea we must be prepared to adopt a new system to meet the altered circumstances

. Now I ask myself this question: Is it certain that the modern leaders of the Free Trade party do not share these antiquated views of Mr. Cobden and his friends? I am not for a moment denying that, according to their own views, and according to their opinions, they are just as patriotic as we are. I am not discussing the morality of the question; I am discussing the facts. Do they think with us that closer relations with our brothers is not only a desirable thing in itself, but that it is our duty, our primary duty, to achieve it? When I read certain of their speeches I cannot find in any one of them any trace of a true appreciation of what the Empire means. I cannot find any enthusiasm, any sentiment whatever, any chord that can be touched, that will strike to this great ideal, as I believe it to be, of the British people. No, sir, I hope I do not do them an injustice, but I cannot see that they care one brass button about Imperial union. The only thing they seem to care about seems to me to be the union of the Radical party. But then it will be said, 'Surely you do not attribute similar views to men like Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Mr. Ritchie, Lord Goschen, and, above all, the Duke of Devonshire?' No, I do not; but I admit that I am totally unable to understand exactly what their position is. They seem to me to be Imperialists in theory, but not in practice. They wish to see an Imperial union, but they refuse to do anything to secure it. Sir Michael Hicks Beach—of whom I desire to speak with the greatest respect—has himself boasted that he has always been against preference. He has refused a preference on wine—that would not increase the price of food to the working classes; he has refused a preference on wine when asked for by Australia; he has refused a preference on tea, a preference on sugar, and a preference on corn, and he glories in his refusal to do a little more for our brothers than he would do for strangers. I do not under-

stand it. It may be all right, but to my mind that is not an Imperial policy. All these gentlemen who have joined the Free Food League were at first, as I understood, determined Free Traders. They would not listen to any departure from that doctrine ; nothing was to touch it in the slightest degree. That is a consistent position to take up ; but I find I am mistaken as to their position, because they are going to support the Government, when the Government have declared through the Prime Minister in unmistakable language that they are not going to allow the foreigner any longer to engage in unfair competition with this country—to dump their goods without any restriction. I quite agree, but no one can conceal from himself that that is a position which is inconsistent with the strict Free Trade doctrine, and in accepting it the Free Fooders have shown that they are not against Protection—that what they are so anxious to protest against is a preference to the colonies. You may protect yourselves against the foreigner, but if you give any advantages even to those who offer you an advantage in return, if in any way, accidentally or otherwise, you benefit your kinsmen abroad, if you assist the colonies into a position in which they will be still more important than they are now as parts of the Empire, if you make concessions to them in order to show gratitude, if you negotiate with them for this purpose, then this is heresy of the worst kind, and the Free Food League is prepared to hound out of public life any statesman who will have the audacity to propose a policy of that kind. I have said, and I say again, I do not understand the position of the Free Food League.

But I turn to another class. I turn to that class of our opponents which is very ably represented by Mr. Asquith. They profess to be, and I believe they are, an Imperialist section of the community. Mr. Asquith declares his sincere sympathy with the consolidation of the Empire, but his view is that my proposals will destroy the unity of the Empire. The argument is very simple. If you once get into negotiation with your friends, then you will quarrel with them. You may negotiate with foreign countries. You may make a

reciprocity treaty with France, you may make a treaty with any other country upon the most ticklish subject, but if your friends in the colonies ask you, for Heaven's sake do not get into negotiation with them. What a logical position! Mr. Asquith says, 'I trust to sentiment. Here is this splendid feeling existing between the colonies and the mother country; let it alone, don't touch it'; and then he argues in favour of an Imperial Council—a thing which I myself greatly desire, which on two separate occasions I have proposed to the representatives of our self-governing colonies, but which on two separate occasions they have said it was premature for them to consider. He proposes this Imperial Council, and what does he think it is going to do? Why, that Imperial Council, whenever it is established, will have to do with such delicate matters as Imperial defence, as Imperial legislation, as Imperial taxation. Apparently Mr. Asquith thinks that the sentiment is strong enough to allow us to negotiate with our colonies on these matters, and, at the same time, it is so brittle that, if we begin to talk to them about a tax on, let us say, brass-work or something of that kind, at once they would break off, and the Empire would be disrupted. Gentlemen, I do not take this view of the opinion of our colonies. I believe that we may just as safely negotiate with them as we may negotiate with any other people on the face of the earth. And I believe that they will meet us with a greater desire to come together than anybody else with whom we can possibly enter into communication.

We know that a preferential system has been asked for by all the colonies on three separate occasions. It was asked for at the Ottawa Conference and at two conferences over which I presided in London. It was asked for by the representatives of the several colonies, and they were not repudiated when they returned home. We know as regards Canada that the Prime Minister of Canada, that the leader of the Opposition, that Mr. Tarte, one of the most distinguished representatives of French Canada, are all in favour of this principle. We know that Mr. Fielding, who

is the Minister of Finance in the present Government, in his Budget speech in the Canadian Parliament, while saying that reciprocal preference was what the Canadian people desire, added, that if their offers and suggestions were put aside by the mother country, no one could complain if they considered themselves free to reconsider the preference they had already given us. They gave us voluntarily of their own accord a preference of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent., and one result of that preference is that our trade with Canada has gone up in the last few years until it is nearly double—it has increased by something like £6,000,000—and the Canadian Government and the Canadian Opposition say that if we are willing to reciprocate they are willing to negotiate and see if they cannot give us further advantages. So much for Canada. In Australia the Prime Minister of Australia, and I may add the Prime Minister of New Zealand, have both made this policy of reciprocal preference a leading article in their programme. My friend Mr. Reid, the leader of the Opposition in Australia, although he is himself a convinced Free Trader, has, if the reports of his speeches have been correct, declared¹ that if he could not have absolute Free Trade, he would be prepared to give the mother country a preference of 50 per cent. In South Africa the whole British community is in favour of the preference of 25 per cent. which has already been accorded to us. Mr. Hofmeyer, the leader of the Dutch community in Cape Town, has made no objection, but he has said that if there be no reciprocity he does not believe that that preference will be lasting.¹ Now those are facts which cannot be disputed. You may draw your own conclusions. For my part, I say that when I remember how the colonies responded to our appeal, when I remember how, when we were in stress and difficulty, they sent us men in thousands and tens of thousands, that they paid money, small, indeed, in comparison with our vast expenditure, but

¹ On May 25, 1914, a motion was brought forward in the Legislative Assembly of the Union of South Africa to cancel the preference given to British trade. In resisting the motion General Botha begged men to wait a little longer, but added that if there was no reciprocity the time would come when they must withdraw the preference.

not inconsiderable when you bear in mind the relative proportion of our population, when I remember how, when every one's hand seemed raised against us, we relied and rested on the moral support that we had from these great growing States across the sea, I for one am not prepared to treat their proposals with contempt, and I believe that we may negotiate with them without fear of a quarrel, and that they will show to us the same spirit of generosity and patriotism which I hope that we shall be ready to show to them.

Now, I have dealt with some general considerations, and I want to say a few words on certain practical aspects of the question. Mr. Asquith, in his speech on Saturday, complained that I ignored the home trade ; that I did not answer his arguments upon this question. I ask Mr. Asquith's pardon. I cannot answer every argument in one speech. I cannot answer all my opponents at once. I remember a case, reported at the time, of a civilian in a foreign country who was supposed to have said something very offensive to a certain regiment. The whole of the officers of the regiment, from the colonel to the ensign, sent him a challenge. He accepted all the challenges, but he said he preferred, if they did not object, to kill them one by one. He added that he hoped they would draw lots as to which was to be first. I wish my opponents would draw lots. I am willing to put Mr. Asquith in the front rank. Now, what does he mean when he says I ignore the home trade ? I do not think I have made a single speech in which I have not given extreme importance to it. Why, sir, the main object I have in view in the whole of this crusade is to secure to this country a strong home trade, to make that the centre of a self-sustaining Empire. Now, I gather that Mr. Asquith thinks the home trade is very prosperous, and that if that is the case, it does not matter how much our export trade is declining. I am not certain that the home trade is very prosperous ; but suppose it is, it is no answer at all to my arguments. . If the foreign trade is declining, and at the same time the foreigners are sending more and more of their goods into our home markets, it does not take a genius to discover that in that

case the home market will suffer sooner or later, and more likely sooner than later.

I believe that all this is a part of the old fallacy about the transfer of employment. This is the idea : you are engaged in a certain industry ; that industry is destroyed by dumping, or foreign competition, or by sweating, or by any other cause. But you have no right to complain ; some other industry is prospering, and it is your own fault if you do not leave the industry which is falling and join the industry which is rising. Well, sir, it is an admirable theory ; it satisfies everything but an empty stomach. Look how easy it is. Your once great trade in sugar refining is gone ; all right, try jam. Your iron trade is going ; never mind, you can make mouse traps. The cotton trade is threatened ; well, what does that matter to you ? Suppose you try dolls' eyes. It was once a Birmingham trade, and that is why I mention it. But how long is this to go on ? Take sugar refining. Very well, that went ; jam took its place. Why on earth are you to suppose that the same process which ruined the sugar refinery will not in the course of time be applied to jam ? And when jam is gone ? Then you have to find something else. And believe me, that although the industries of this country are very various, you cannot go on for ever. You cannot go on watching with indifference the disappearance of your principal industries, and always hoping that you will be able to replace them by secondary and inferior industries. And, putting aside altogether the individual suffering that is caused by every transfer of employment, by taking the working man from some trade in which he has been brought up, and in which he has been engaged all his life, and setting him down to something else to which he is not accustomed, and for which he has no aptitude—putting aside all that individual suffering, I say there is no evidence whatever that there is any real compensation to the nation. There is no evidence whatever that when one trade goes another immediately takes its place.

I observe that Sir William Harcourt has been looking

at the Blue Book, and not only that, but he has taken advantage of passing through Derby and Birmingham in a railway carriage to make observations in regard to our commercial position. What he said in effect is: 'It may be that some industries are decaying, but then others are growing, and as I passed through these places I saw evidence of enormous activity on the part of the building trade.' I have a letter to-day from a builder in Derby. He says that in Derby a great number of men are out of employment in the building trade. But really that does not affect the argument. The building trade: What does it mean? The tinsplate trade is bad, and are the tinsplate operatives to lay bricks? But what an illustration! What an unfortunate illustration to take! The building trade is one of the few trades in this country which is protected, not by legislation, but by the circumstances, the necessary circumstances of the trade and the regulations of the trade. Have you ever heard—there may be a case, but I do not know of it—have you ever heard of a foreign contractor, say an Italian builder, coming over here and competing with British builders to build houses or public buildings or manufactories—bringing over with him his own labour, at, let us say, 1s. to 2s. 6d. a day, and accordingly contracting for much lower prices? My latest experience is that of the Birmingham University. We put forward our specifications and asked for tenders. No foreigner—no foreigner offered to compete, and, if the progress of the building trade is to be quoted at all it tells in favour of Protection, and not in favour of Free Trade. As I have said, by natural circumstances the building trade is protected, and if there were to be such an incident—if a foreign contractor were to come over from some country where labour is cheaper and bring that cheap labour to build either our university or anything else—I think he would find himself in a very difficult position. I say, then, that it is childish to suggest to you, in the first place, that a decaying industry can transfer all its capital and all its labour to the building trade, or to some other prosperous industry; and, in the second place, it is absurd to suppose that an industry

in the condition of the building trade is any argument whatever in favour of free imports.

If you had taken building materials, that would have been a very different case. I think those who make all the details of house furniture, those who make iron girders for the support of your floors and roofs, those who, in former times at any rate—those joiners and carpenters who made doors and window-frames—they, perhaps, would have a different tale to tell. The builders' trade as a contractors' trade is, as I have said, naturally protected, but there is no protection at all for the materials which come into the business. Now, if our opponents fail, as I think they do fail absolutely, in producing any satisfactory explanation which would justify us in believing that all that is lost in one trade is made up in another, let us see what is the condition of the decaying industries. Mr. Asquith jeers at me, and says I have been working with I do not know how many assistants—I wish I had them—I have been gathering statistics of these decaying trades, and that yet I can produce very few cases. On the contrary, I can produce scores, but I am not going to fill up a whole speech with the history of decaying trades. What I have endeavoured to do is to deal in each place I have visited with some of the industries with which the people are familiar.

I will take one or two out of a sheaf in which Birmingham men are concerned. Take the jewellery trade. We have only statistics for three years; before that time the Board of Trade did not separate jewellery. In 1900 we sold to foreigners £50,000 worth; we imported from the same foreigners £137,000 worth, and we were £87,000 to the bad. That was in 1900; but in 1902 we were £170,000 to the bad; that is to say, in those three years in this foreign trade we were twice as badly off as we were in 1900. What is the reason? Well, there are tariffs which prevent you from sending your jewellery into these foreign countries, and which range up to 45 per cent.; and at the same time that this is going on the colonies are buying twice as much as all the foreign countries put together. It is a very curious

thing whichever way you look at this matter, whether you take an individual trade or whether you take the general results of trade altogether, you have always the same result ; decline in exports to foreign countries, increase of foreign imports to this country, only concealed, only compensated, by increase in colonial trade. Take brass manufacture, and I mean the smaller brass manufacture. In the last ten years the imports from foreign countries have increased threefold. The tariff upon brass-work ranges up to 60 per cent., and the colonies are our best customers. I do not know what other people think, but I think that if this continues, and if the colonial trade were to decline, as it will do if you do not adopt this system of reciprocal preference, the brass trade will decline, and not all the Trade Unionists in the world will save the brass trade from ruin, or the people who are employed in the brass trade from the destitution and misery from which we wish to protect them. Will you have another trade? Well, take one of the oldest in Birmingham. It is mentioned in Hutton's *History*. In the pearl-button trade six thousand workpeople used to be employed, and to-day there are about one thousand, and very few of them have full employment. Why is that? It is largely due to the influence of the M'Kinley tariff, which shut out pearl buttons from America, and it is partly due to the dumping of pearl buttons from the Continent into England, and even into Birmingham itself. I received to-day a telegram from a great house in the city who said that whereas Birmingham used to produce smallwares of all kinds, and was the largest source of them, they are now got chiefly from Germany, and that one of the greatest German manufacturers had told him that if Mr. Chamberlain's policy were to be carried, and he thought that it was—and so do I—if it were carried he would bring his manufactory over here, and if he brought his manufactory over here it would be British workmen who would be employed, who would get the wages which are now enjoyed by German workmen. I wonder what has become of the five thousand pearl-button makers who were once employed and who have lost their employment?

I will only give you one more. This time I am going to take a new industry, a comparatively new industry. Take the cycle trade. Now, what is the case there? Our exports to the foreign protected countries have fallen £566,000 in ten years. Our exports to the colonies rose in the same period £367,000. What was the cause of that change? When the foreigners found that the manufacture of cycles was rather a good thing they put tariffs on cycles ranging up to 45 per cent.; and not content with that, when the time of depression was strongest in America, the Americans dumped their cycles down here at prices with which the English manufacturers could not compete. In 1897 the United States of America sent to the United Kingdom alone £460,000 worth of cycles, and at the same time they flooded the colonies, sending to British possessions £340,000 worth, all of which we might have had if we had had tariffs to prevent unfair competition, if we had had preference arrangements with the colonies which would have kept the trade for us.

I have one point more. If this great question had to be solved upon these considerations alone, upon the decline of our foreign trade, upon the progress of our foreign competitors, upon the necessity of keeping the colonies with us—I should have no fear. The working classes of this country, the business men of this country, they know where the shoe pinches better than the political economists and the lawyers who profess to instruct them. But when we come to this, when we have got so far, then our opponents play their trump-card. Then they say, 'Very well, if it be true that your trade is falling off, that your primary industries are decaying, still you had better bear the evil that you know sooner than risk an evil that you know not of. You cannot make any change'—again, what a curious argument for a Radical!—'you cannot make any change without being worse off. And, above all, if you are foolish enough to listen to the Tariff Reformers you will find the price of your food increased, the old bad days will return, destitution will be your lot, famine will stare you in the face. If you

do not mind starvation yourselves, think of your families, think of your children.' My answer is, that all this prediction of evil resulting from my proposals—prediction which you ought to suspect, because it comes from prophets who have always been wrong—is a grotesque misrepresentation.

I want to give you a practical illustration. You know that during the last few weeks the walls of Birmingham have been covered with a poster, a flaming poster which is intended as an advertisement for a London newspaper which made itself notorious for its pro-Boer sympathies during the late war, and for the ready credence which it gave to every calumny on our soldiers or upon our statesmen. That poster shows you the big loaf bigger than any I have ever seen—I should think it must weigh about eight-and-twenty pounds. It shows you a little loaf, smaller than any I have ever seen, and which, I suppose, might weigh a few ounces. And it tickets one 'The Free Trade Loaf,' and it tickets the little one 'The Zollverein Loaf.' The placard has no other object than to induce you to believe that if you adopt my policy of preference with the colonies it is this little bit of a loaf to which you and your families will be reduced, and you will have sacrificed the mammoth loaf which appears in another part of the poster. Now, I have had the curiosity to inquire what would be the exact difference in the size of the loaf if the whole tax which I propose to be put upon corn was met by a corresponding reduction in the size of the loaf. I asked my friend Mr. Alderman Bowkett to make me two loaves in order to test this question.¹

I do not know whether your eyes are better than mine, but I admit that when I first saw these loaves I was absolutely unable to tell which was the little one and which was the big one. I know there is a difference, because I know that in the smaller one a few ounces less flour have been

¹ The report of the proceedings states: 'Mr. Chamberlain here unwrapped a parcel on the platform and produced two quartern loaves, which he held aloft, and which had no perceptible difference in size.'

used in order to correspond to the amount of the tax. But it is still, I think, a sporting question which is the big one and which is the little one. What is to be said of a cause which is supported by such dishonest representations as the one to which I have referred? You can see for yourselves that the difference is slight, but that is not the whole of the case. I have pointed out—I have given you figures and arguments which I will not repeat—that there is reason to believe that the greater part of the tax, whatever it may be, will be paid by the foreigner and not by the consumer. But I have said something else—so anxious am I that in no conceivable circumstances it shall ever be said of me that I increased the cost of living, the burden of life, to the poor of this country, that I have said I will take an extreme case. I will suppose that the whole tax is paid by the consumer, and I will give him an exactly equivalent amount in remission on other taxes which enter into his daily existence.

I have done. I have endeavoured, in the course of my speech to-night as I have done in all the other speeches that I have delivered, while attempting to answer serious arguments, still to avoid anything in the nature of purely party or personal controversy. I recognise with sorrow that some of those with whom I have been intimately connected in recent years of my political life differ from me on this point. I recognise with pleasure and gratification that, on the other hand, some of the strongest of my political opponents are with me now. They see as I do, that this is a question above party—a question which affects national interests. I have endeavoured to state the case as I see it, to state it fairly and honestly. I have not taken, as has been suggested, I have not taken my figures, or my facts, or my quotations secondhand. Although I have had a great task put upon my shoulders, yet I have endeavoured, as far as that was possible, to verify myself everything that I have asserted. I have not tried to rush your decision. I have not endeavoured to take people by surprise; on the contrary, I have asked for discussion and deliberation, and it is only after hearing all that can be said on both sides that I desire that you should come

to your final conclusion. The issue will be in your hands. It will be with the people of this country. And none more momentous has ever been submitted to any nation at any time. Here, at any rate, is one point upon which all parties are agreed, whether we be Free Traders or whether we be Tariff Reformers : we all alike agree that the issue which is now raised is one on which may depend the prosperity of the country, the welfare of its people, the union of the Empire. For my part, ladies and gentlemen, I care very little whether the result will be to make this country, already rich, a little richer. The character of a nation is more important than its opulence. What I care for is that this people shall rise to the height of its great mission ; that they who, in past generations, have made a kingdom, surpassed by none, should now in altered circumstances and new conditions show themselves to be worthy of the leadership of the British race, and, in co-operation with our kinsmen across the seas, they should combine to make an Empire which may be, which ought to be, greater, more united, more fruitful for good, than any Empire in human history.

PRINCIPLE

CARDIFF, NOVEMBER 20, 1903

It is no commercial repose we want, it is commercial activity. It is time to change our system. We are losing our old customers. We have set them a good example. They do not follow it. Let us try whether a gentle pressure may not be found still more convincing, and, above all, let us draw closer the ties between ourselves and our colonies by accepting offers of advantage which no other country can give to us. Let us meet their requests in the spirit which dictated them, not in a peddling or huckstering spirit, which would be as discreditable to us as their action is creditable to them. They are not animated merely by selfish interests. They see as we ought to see—as

I think we do—that our future history depends upon the extent to which we can weld the different parts of the Empire together. What Washington did for the United States of America, what Bismarck did for Germany, it is our business to do for the British Empire. We are here, forty-two millions of persons. But outside, scattered indeed, but still with one heart and mind, there are some eleven millions more. We can begin with an Empire of between fifty and sixty millions of the British race, and over and above that we have hundreds of millions of those native races for which we have made ourselves responsible. And to bring them together is our task. It is not enough to talk platitudes about the Empire. We have to make it and to strengthen it. Then indeed we can look forward to the unknown future with the calm confidence of strength which depends upon union.

I was brought up myself in the true orthodoxy of Free Trade, and, even after I had come to have doubts on the subject, I do not think that I should have made myself a protagonist in this struggle if it had not been for my experience in that great office which I recently filled; had it not been for the knowledge I gained there, and from what I learned of the opinion of our kinsmen across the seas, and the impression which was made upon me that this Empire, to the continued existence of which I attach such deep and tremendous importance, could not permanently be kept together without some strengthening of the bonds which, at present, bind us one to the other. . . . Our great Imperial principle is to treat each other better than we are treated by any one else.

TARIFF REFORM AND UNEMPLOYMENT

LIMEHOUSE, DECEMBER 15, 1904

In the following speech reference is made to the colonial offers of preference for certain British-manufactured goods, and to the proposed colonial conference. The latter was Mr. Chamberlain's answer to those of his

opponents who cast doubt on the solidity of the Dominions' attitude: 'Call a conference; allow the colonists to speak for themselves; then you will know whether they want preference and what they will offer in return.' The conference was actually held in the summer of 1907, when Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Government had succeeded that of Mr. Balfour; and the case for mutual preference was strongly urged by representatives of the Dominions, notably by Dr. (later Sir) Starr Jameson and Mr. Deakin. Against these proposals the policy of the Imperial Government, in Mr. Churchill's words, 'slammed, bolted and barred the door.']

I AM very grateful to those who have organised this meeting, and to you who have attended it, for giving me an opportunity of addressing representatives of the working classes in the East of London. This is a district in which the condition of the majority of the people is certainly very hard, in which the margin of subsistence is very small, and therefore, if, as some of my opponents are kind enough to suggest, it is my desire to make your lot harder, to increase the cost of your living, I should say that I was a very foolish person to come amongst you at all. I do come amongst you because I believe in my heart and conscience that the greatest evil from which you suffer is the antiquated policy of our fiscal system. Now what I ask from you to-night is a fair hearing. I ask you to hear what I have to say, to consider it carefully, and, above all, to weigh it upon its merits, without regard to party or to personal consideration.

Let us go to the root of the matter. I put before my countrymen two questions. I ask them in the first place whether they think that a policy which is sixty years old, which was based on promises that have never been fulfilled, which was conceived in circumstances altogether different from those in which we move, can be suitable to our modern conditions? I ask them, in the second place, what are to be our future relations with our colonies? what is to be the future of the great Empire of which we are all a part?

Now, in my opinion, there has to be a reform both in our domestic policy and in our external policy as far as it regards our colonies, and I say the probability is that I am right. Surely in that respect the argument is all on my side. Is not change the order of our being? Has that not been a

Radical doctrine from time immemorial ? Is not everything altering around us—the relative position of nations and countries, the conduct of our commerce, our population, our strength, our politics, our science ? All are changing day by day. I venture to assert that the most retrograde Tory in the most retrograde of times never committed himself to such an insane policy of stagnation as has now been accepted by the party which calls itself Radical, which professes to be the party of progress, in regard to a dogma which it treats as sacred and inspired, but which history and experience have already discredited.

But if the probabilities are in my favour, so are the facts. What has happened in that interval of sixty years ? One by one every civilised nation, every civilised state, including the great democratic nation which dominates on the other side of the Atlantic, including every colony under the British flag—one by one they have rejected this extreme doctrine of Free Trade or of Free Imports. One by one they have found it wanting ; and we alone remain still adhering to this old superstition. But there is more than that. The case may be like that of the unfortunate gentleman who was the inmate of a lunatic asylum. It may be we are the only sane people and that all the rest of the world is mad. But how does it happen that every one of those nations, without exception, has progressed in all that makes a nation more quickly than we have advanced during the same period ? It is not a question of whether we are richer now than we were fifty years ago or a thousand years ago. It is a question which of us in the race for existence, that has been going on ever since the world began, is progressing more rapidly, and which of us is going further. I say that, treating the matter by that test, we, who during the last sixty years have stuck consistently to the doctrine of Free Imports, have opened our ports to all the world, while all the world has shut its ports to us—I say that, although we have shared in the general prosperity, the comparative advance has been much more largely with our competitors.

Well, there is another point of view. The doctrine of Mr.

Cobden was a consistent doctrine. His view was that there should be no interference by the State in our domestic concerns. He believed that individuals should be left to themselves to make the best of their abilities and circumstances, and that there should be no attempt to equalise the conditions of life and happiness. To him, accordingly, protection of labour was quite as bad as protection of trade. To him a trade union was worse than a landlord. To him all factory legislation was as bad as the institution of tariffs. That is a consistent doctrine. I am not arguing now whether it was right or wrong, but it was upon the basis of that doctrine that we had imposed upon us our present fiscal system by a Parliament which, in those days, was not in the slightest degree representative of the majority of the country, and above all of the working classes.

Now, it cannot be denied that all parties have given up these harsh theories. We now no longer think that we ought to leave human beings like ourselves, born into the world for no fault of their own, to struggle against the overpowering pressure of circumstances. We do not believe in the theory of every one for himself and the devil take the hindmost. Accordingly, we have for years been engaged in considering—I think I may say without conceit no one more seriously than myself—these questions of social reform. Now, note something. During the last thirty or fifty years there has been a great deal of what is called social legislation. By whom has it been promoted? By the Conservative party, and latterly by the Unionist party. You owe all your factory legislation to Lord Shaftesbury as its originator. You owe to the Unionist party free education, and that provision for allotments and small holdings which has, at all events, secured for the labourers in the country something like 100,000 holdings which they had not before. You owe to us compensation for workmen in the case of accidents during the course of their business. Now, why is that? I do not pretend that the Liberal or Radical party, either now or formerly, are or have been less anxious to do good—less philanthropic, or less considerate for the poor than we are ;

but they have been prevented from taking this course by the theories by which they have been governed. All this legislation is inconsistent with what they call Free Trade. You must no more interfere to raise the standard of living, to raise the wages of working men, than you must interfere to raise the price of goods or the profits of manufacturers.

I will go further. I will say that what we have done cannot be maintained unless at the same time you go further. Let me give you an illustration. I was myself concerned largely in the Act which gave compensation for accidents. I got very little help from the other side while that measure was passing. On the contrary, if they did not openly oppose it, they did everything they could to embarrass me in the work of carrying it out and to delay its operation. What do they say now ? They say it does not go far enough. When it was proposed I wished to go further, but it was difficult enough to carry it as it was ; and I was well satisfied that my colleagues and our supporters in the House of Commons enabled me to carry it as far as I did. Since then it has been extended with universal consent, and I shall not be satisfied until it is extended to every class of labour throughout the country. But it cannot stand alone. By that Act what is it we do ? We put upon the employer everywhere an additional obligation. We add thereby to his cost of production. We put him at a disadvantage with his foreign competitor, who has no such legislation. Now, if we do not make a balance somehow or another, one of two things will happen. Either the working classes of this country will have to accept lower wages in proportion to the extra cost which has been put upon the manufacturer, or else they will lose their employment. Trade will go to those foreign countries which are not troubled by any of these humanitarian considerations. This attempt of ours to protect the weak, to raise the general standard of living, to regulate the conditions of trade in the interest of the working men—it is very good ; but—take this to heart—remember that it is inconsistent with Free Trade. You cannot have Free

Trade in goods in the sense in which our opponents use the word, and at the same time have protection of labour.

What is the experience of the world? Take the United States of America: take our own colonies. It is universally admitted that in those countries the general standard of living, the position of comfort and prosperity in which the working classes exist, is superior to their condition in this country. They have a tariff. I am accused of desiring to have a similar tariff in this country. I desire nothing of the sort. You will find if you go either to the colonies or to the United States that there are many men who think that their tariffs are excessive, are unnecessary, give useless trouble, and might with advantage be reduced. But you will not find, I believe, a single man of influence or importance, whether among the manufacturing classes or amongst the working men of America and the colonies, who will not tell you that the principle of a tariff is part of a system for the elevation of the working classes, and that if they adopted our policy of Free Imports it would absolutely be impossible for them to maintain the high level of general prosperity to which they have attained.

Take the case of Germany. That is more complicated, because there is a controversy there as to whether the German working man is in a better or as good a position as our working people at home. As far as I can make out, the Cobden Club, which ought to know something about foreigners, believes that the German workman lives entirely upon black bread and horse flesh, just as a hundred years ago, when I suppose these antediluvian politicians were born, the people of this country were induced to think that the Frenchman lived entirely upon snails and the legs of frogs. But that opinion of the Cobden Club is disputed. There are other people equally worthy of attention who have come to a totally different conclusion, and who say that, country for country, the poor in this country were worse off than the poor in any other country. I do not attempt to decide between these great authorities. It would be impertinent of me to do so. I ask any of you who are in-

terested in this subject to look at a book which has been recently published by Professor Ashley, a most careful and impartial authority, in which you will find everything that is known about the position of the German workman compared with the workman in this country. From reading that book I have come to this conclusion, that whether at the present moment the German workman is better off than our workman or not is an open question. But what is not an open question, what is certain, is that the progress of the German workman, since a tariff was adopted in that country under the strong influence of Prince Bismarck, has been much greater, quicker, and more evident than the progress of the working man in this country.

However, this is the point which I wish to impress on the working men, whether here or anywhere else. If you determine to continue the policy of unrestricted imports in this country without reference to how they are produced or by whom they are produced, then in that case you cannot maintain any form of protection of labour. The competition of these cheaper goods, goods made cheaper by artificial causes, or by differences—natural differences, some of them—between ourselves and the foreign countries concerned, will force down the prices, and you will have to take lower wages or lose your employment. This consideration of the necessity of meeting somehow the increased cost which may be produced by the higher standard of living touches the people of the East End more nearly, I think, than the population of any other part of the United Kingdom.

You are suffering from the unrestricted imports of cheaper goods. You are suffering also from the unrestricted immigration of the people who make these goods. I am not going to-night—for it is not my duty—into the details of this question of alien immigration. After all, there are others here who know more about it than I do. The whole subject has been fully placed before the House of Commons and the country by the Unionist members for the East End of London. And when I mention the Unionist members for this part of London, I can hardly pass the allusion by

without expressing what, I am sure, is the deep regret of us all at the recent death of Mr. Spencer Charrington. He was indeed an example to all of us. He held his beliefs strongly, and for his beliefs he was prepared at any time to sacrifice most things that men hold dear. He put his health, his strength, his money—that is the least of all—at the disposal of those whose opinions he shared and whose views he believed to be essential to the welfare of his country. He was a most admirable member of the House of Commons, and we who were his colleagues are certainly not the least capable of appreciating his merits or the least likely to regret his loss. I say the question of alien immigration, so far as it is specially interesting to this district, has been, I think, fully stated. I refer to it now as an illustration to help my general argument—an illustration of Free Trade fanaticism.

The evils of this immigration have increased during recent years. And behind those people who have already reached these shores, remember there are millions of the same kind who, under easily conceivable circumstances, might follow in their track, and might invade this country in a way and to an extent of which few people have at present any conception. The same causes that brought ten thousand and twenty thousand, and tens of thousands, may bring hundreds of thousands, or even millions. If that would be an evil, surely he is a statesman who would deal with it in the beginning. The argument of our opponents is the same on this subject as it is on the general subject of the injury done to our trade by free imports. They said with regard to aliens, they say with regard to free imports, 'Oh! Why make this fuss? The damage is not perceptible; it only affects a few trades. Agriculture? Yes; but then this country is not meant for agriculture. Iron is in danger, but, after all, there are still ironmasters in existence. Other things are threatened, but "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."' That is not statesmanship. This attempt to go on from hand to mouth, praying that something which you see coming may still be intercepted, doing

anything rather than meet the difficulty in the face—this is a quality which, wishing to be fair to my opponents, I must admit they possess in perfection.

In this fiscal controversy my opponents are very glad to put up a boggy which can be very easily knocked down. They find it much easier than answering the real arguments which are addressed to their reason. They say that I have predicted the immediate ruin of this country. I have never predicted anything of the kind; I have pointed out certain cracks in the great edifice of British commerce; I have pointed out changes which have gone on, which are going on, under our eyes. I have said if these continue they will be extremely serious, especially to the majority of the people, to the working classes, who depend on the work of their hands, and I have urged my countrymen to take them while there is still time, and not to leave them until they have grown so large that they cannot easily be dealt with by any human intervention.

I say this question of alien immigration is a thing which some of our opponents, at any rate, might profitably take to heart. When it began we were told it was so small that it would not matter to us. Now it has been growing and growing with great rapidity. It has already affected a whole district, it is spreading into other parts of the country. I have complaints from provincial towns, from Leeds, for instance, even from some parts of Scotland. Will you take it in time, or will you wait, hoping for something to turn up which will preserve you from what you all see to be the natural consequences of such an invasion?

Now a word as to the people themselves. I, for one, am not going to press hardly upon these poor people. They have been driven from their homes by the pressure of want, by the grossest and the most brutal persecution, and I think they are subjects for pity and for practical sympathy. The problem is how are they to be saved from the fate which is befalling them, how is their salvation to be accomplished without the ruin of our own people at home? While I was in office I did what I could. I had several conferences with

the late Dr. Herzl, a man who made upon me the greatest impression, whose sincerity and patriotism and ability were such as must have provoked the regard of any one who became aware of them. And in principle, at any rate, I can say that we were agreed that the best solution of this question was to find some country in this world of ours, if possible under the ægis of the British flag, or under the protection, if you please, of a concert of nations, in which these poor exiles from their native land, who do not leave it out of caprice, or with any desire to injure us, could dwell in safety, following their own religion and their own aspirations, and where they could find subsistence without in any way interfering with the subsistence of others. That was our object.

That is the solution of the question. But meanwhile, under our policy of the open door, we have, as it were, built a bridge between the countries in which these people suffer and our own country, which is already too full and which cannot, without great injury, suffer the admission of so large a population. I have said that I do not wish to press upon these people hardly. Far be it from me to blame them, considering the circumstances in which they have lived. But it is the fact that when these aliens come here, they are answerable for a larger amount of crime and disease and hopeless poverty than is proportionate to their numbers. They come here—I do not blame them, I am speaking of the results—they come here and change the whole character of a district. The speech, the nationality, of whole streets has been altered; and British workmen have been driven by the fierce competition of famished men from trades which they previously followed. I ask you, is it good for the people themselves that they should be tempted to come here? Is it good for men to be herded together like beasts in a pen, to starve upon a few pence a day, doled out to them by employers who seem to be deficient in the bowels of compassion? I say it is bad for you, that it is bad for them; and so far as I am concerned I have always been, and I am now, in favour of giving to the Executive Govern-

ment the strongest power of control over this alien immigration.

But the party of Free Imports is against any reform. How could they be otherwise? If they were openly to admit that the policy which I recommend ought to be adopted, they would be giving up their whole theory. Where would Mr. Cobden be? Where would the doctrine of free imports be? Where would the doctrine of cheap goods be? They are perfectly consistent. If sweated goods are to be allowed in this country without restriction, why not the people who make them? Where is the difference? There is no difference either in the principle or in the results. It all comes to the same thing—less labour for the British working man. This alien problem is only part of a greater problem—the problem of the employment of our people. The true question is not whether this country is richer or poorer, the question is whether this country provides sufficient employment at remunerative rates for all who seek it. The Free Importers seem to lose sight of what is really the crux of the whole matter, provided they can see a good account of the income-tax, provided they know that everything in the country is cheap: it does not seem to matter to them whether what the country requires is provided by foreigners or by aliens in our midst, or whether it is provided, as I say it ought to be, by British working men either at home or in our colonies. Now I say this is essentially a working man's question. I must confess that I do not believe one bit in the statistics which the Cobden Club are good enough to produce for our entertainment; I think they are incomplete, inadequate, and in many cases irrelevant and altogether inaccurate. But grant them all, assume for the purposes of the argument that all these figures are correct, still they do not touch the real question that I have raised; and for my part I prefer the experience of the people, and especially the experience of the working man, to all the statistics that they can produce. Let me test that. Statistics show, according to them, that this country is getting richer every day, that our imports are increasing—that we know—that

our exports are increasing, not in the same proportion, but still considerably—that, in fact, we are in the best of all possible worlds. But how does that agree with the facts? I grant you, if you like, the country is getting richer; but it does not seem to me that that is enough. We want to know that the people are getting happier; and where do we see the signs of that under the existing system?

Any way, this matter is very much in your own hands. You are the judges. You are Cæsar to whom I appeal. If your verdict goes against me, I have nothing but to submit; and if you think, all of you, that you are as well off as you ought to be, if you think that your condition cannot be improved, if you believe that all is well with you, and that all these tales we hear of people being on the verge of hunger, of people unemployed seeking for work, of people who are starving in the midst of plenty—if you believe that all these are idle fancies of mistaken philanthropists, then, gentlemen, it is I who wish you to vote against me. If you are happy, I am quite content that you should leave well alone. But if, on the contrary, you find that somehow or another this apparent prosperity shown by the figures is not represented in the actual condition of the people, then try with me to see if you can find out the reason. Now, what is the reason? I think that a great change is going on in the condition of trade in this country. I was reading a very interesting book by a German—a certain Dr. Karl Peters, who is well known in the colonial world, and who seems to be a careful and fairly impartial observer—and he put his finger on what I believe to be the spot. He says that England is still a great country; that it is growing richer every day; that it has wonderful energy and prosperity. But, he points out, it now is going on new lines. Whereas at one time England was the greatest manufacturing country, now its people are more and more employed in finance, in distribution, in domestic service, and in other occupations of the same kind. That state of things is consistent with ever-increasing wealth. It may mean more money, but it means less men. It may mean more wealth, but it means less

welfare ; and I think it is worth while to consider—whatever its immediate effects may be—whether that state of things will not be the destruction ultimately of all that is best in England, all that has made us what we are, all that has given us our prestige and power in the world ; whether it will not be bad for all these qualities, if we sink into the position of Holland, which is rich—richer than ever it was before—but still an inconsiderable factor in the history of the world.

Let us try a homely illustration. Suppose in a certain village there was a manufacturer who was worth £100,000, and he had a mill which employed 500 people, and then suppose, owing to this unrestricted foreign competition, the manufacturer failed, the mill was closed, and 500 people were turned out of employment. And then we will suppose that a millionaire came into the village and took his place, and that he rented a shooting-box, and employed, say, 50 people to look after his horses and his house. Very good. What is the first result ? The first result is that that village is £900,000 richer than it was before. Yes, but there are 450 less inhabitants employed. Now take another case—a case which is arising every day and which is growing more frequent every day, a case the reverse of that which was suggested by our chairman in his opening speech as being the result of such a policy as I propose. At present British manufacturers are going abroad. I should like to see foreign manufacturers come here. But here is the case. In a certain town or village, as it may be, there is a manufacture which employs 500 people. The trade is half with Germany and half at home. Germany puts on duties which would make the trade in Germany impossible. Thereupon the manufacturer who wants to keep his trade carries over half his machinery to Germany, and thereafter he employs 250 Germans and 250 Englishmen. What is the result there ? The manufacturer is just as rich as before. He has just as large an income, but there are 250 fewer Englishmen—Britons—employed ; and what becomes of them ? They have to disperse about the country. They may go to the

workhouse, they may join the great army—Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's army—of 13,000,000 of people on the verge of hunger, or if they do not do this, they are forced in middle life to learn some new trade, for which they are not prepared, to endeavour to gain a scanty livelihood, where before they were in a comfortable position.

I have tried in what I have said to you to force you to see that this is not, as our opponents say, a rich man's question. I have never been able to see how a rich man—a man already rich—would be materially benefited by my policy. Of course, if the whole country profited, I suppose he would profit in a like manner. But as he would probably have to pay more for his luxuries, I think it is possible he would lose more than he would gain. But to the working man it is life and death. I say that of all the social questions in which any man can interest himself there is none greater, none more promising of valuable result, than the question of how to increase the employment of the working classes. At all events, be that as it may, I tell you I would never have—to use a well-known expression—taken off my coat in this movement unless I believed, as I do believe, that this great result of more remunerative employment for those who have to gain the subsistence of themselves and their families by the work of their hands will be achieved.

But, I am told, 'you will increase the cost of living.' Well, suppose I did; which is the better for a working man—to have a loaf a farthing dearer and plenty of money in his pocket, or to have a loaf for twopence or threepence and no money to buy it? Therefore I am not afraid of that argument. I would be willing for the sake of argument, although I believe it to be utterly untrue, to argue the question on the assumption that there was going to be a trifling rise in the cost of living, because I should say, 'You are sensible men, you will do what everybody else would do in similar circumstances—you will draw a balance, you will not mind paying more if you get more in proportion.' In my view the cost of living is not the most important thing for the working man to consider. What he has to consider as

most important to him is the price which he gets for his labour.

But, gentlemen, do not be deceived ; it so happens that all that I want for the purposes of this crusade does not involve a farthing's increased cost of living to any working-man. All that it requires is a scientific, a reasonable transposition of taxation. A Government has to take out of the pockets even of the poorest of working men a certain amount of money. I am not going to increase that amount, but it is possible that I may take it out of one pocket rather than out of the other. He has to bear the burden in any case ; I may put it on his right shoulder instead of on his left. That is the whole of the change which I propose in the taxation of this country. And if as a result more should be obtained by the changes that I propose than is required for present expenditure, the natural consequence would be that it would go back in a stream to the working men, and to others from whom it has been taken, in a reduction of taxation upon some other article.

That is not the only argument which I have to meet. My opponents are many, and their arguments differ. I will do them this justice—that among them there are men who try to conduct this controversy in a fair spirit, who recognise that all this talk about the big loaf and the little loaf and of going back to the hungry 'forties is a fraud and an imposture. In the hungry 'forties, although I do not think men were hungry because of the price of food, but were hungry then, as they are hungry now, from the lack of sufficient employment—in the hungry 'forties the duty on corn was 20s. a quarter. What do I propose ? A duty of 2s. My honest critics, at all events, admit that a tax of 2s. a quarter is so trifling that it probably would not be perceived ; that it is almost certain, as in the case of the 1s. duty that we experienced the other year, that the whole charge would be paid by the foreigner as a toll for entering the great British market, the best in the world. But then, my critics say, and I believe they are honestly afraid, that although 2s. would do no harm, yet it would be only the beginning, and

that if you accepted 2s. you would be forced to accept 5s., 10s., 20s., or anything you like. Who is to force you? Who has the power in this country at the present time? You can do what you like, I hope, always within reason. You can reject the policy I put before you in your own interests. Yours be the consequences. You can reject it or accept it. If you accept it, and find it does not succeed, you can reverse it. There is no power in this country to prevent it. You can reverse it or amend it. The whole thing is in your hands. Yours is the power, yours is the responsibility. My duty ceases when I have put before you what I have made some sacrifice in order to promote.

Do not mistake. I am not alluding to any sacrifice of personal advantage. I mean the sacrifice of congenial employment, and of the hope that I was doing something to introduce a great policy which would conduce to the greatness of the Empire and the prosperity of this country. But I have sacrificed the power and influence which office gives in order to be able to put before you this question of fiscal reform free and untrammelled by any party connection. I say that I have done my duty; it is for you to do yours. What will you do? I have been in politics thirty years and more. I suppose I am now coming towards the latter end of my political work. But during all that time I defy my worst enemy to say that I have not trusted in the people who have made me what I am, my own people in Birmingham, the people to whom I owe everything, the people who know me best, and to whom, therefore, I also have a special responsibility. And this is what I have learned—that the working people of this country are, perhaps, a little slow in taking in new ideas; that it is difficult to make them understand the complicated details of a great question; that when they find the figures of one man contradicted by the figures of another, they are hardly capable of acting as judges between them. But I have learned also that when a great principle is put before the working men of Great Britain they have never in my experience been wrong: They may have delayed their decision, but sooner or later they have

accepted the principle which is most just and, therefore, at the same time the most wise. I ask you what you are going to do, and I shall wait and see. Meanwhile, excuse me if I continue to have confidence in the patriotism and in the good sense of my fellow-countrymen.

I told you there were two issues. I am coming to the second. What are to be our future relations with the British colonies across the sea? I do not conceal from you that it is on this side of the question that I feel most deeply, because I believe it is most urgent. You can postpone fiscal reform, and perhaps you will still be able to carry it out when it becomes apparent to you that it is necessary. But at this moment you have an opportunity in your relations with your colonies which may not come again; and if you do not grasp it now, believe me, you will be held responsible when the sceptre of our dominion has passed from our hands; you will be held responsible by your descendants in that you were too feeble, too selfish, to maintain your grasp of the great inheritance which your ancestors have left to you. Now this question of the colonies is also a new question in the sense that it cannot be treated on the principle which prevailed in Cobden's day. Sixty years ago the colonies were in their infancy. They were distant, so distant that they were almost out of mind; and with statesmen of that day there prevailed a tone of indifference, if not worse, and the majority of them appeared to be more anxious to get rid of the colonies amicably than to establish any kind of unity. The idea that all these great populations of our blood should ever combine in one great Empire with one mind in order to protect common interests, and defend them against a common foe—such an idea would have been laughed at as absolutely impracticable. Now, am I wrong in saying that the great majority of the people of this land have no clearer wish than to bring all men of British race into one great and organised union? In these later years it has been brought home to us, I hope, that great as we are, rich as we are told we are, we are not great enough, not rich enough, to bear on our own shoulders alone the whole burden

of this mighty fabric of Empire which we and our predecessors have created. Yet we know that if anything happened to destroy it, all the glory which attaches to our history, the continuance of the great traditions on which we live and breathe, our influence in the councils of the world—all would disappear with the Empire to which we belong.

Now, that Empire is supported at the present time by ties of sentiment alone. Is it not conceivable that, if a crisis came under the existing circumstances of the world, with new empires that have sprung into existence, new powers that have to be considered—is it not conceivable that the tie of sentiment alone would not be sufficient in that time of crisis to meet the new contingencies which would arise? It is not a question of loyalty. Colonists are as loyal to us—sometimes I think they are more loyal—than we are to them. In all quarters of the globe, in different climates and conditions, they have been brought face to face with this great problem. They have considered it from their own point of view as well as from ours. They have read history. They have more imagination than we, I am afraid, frequently possess. They have recognised that, while the union as it has existed for the past fifty years may be sufficient in the infancy of the colonies, and especially if the whole object of such a union is to prepare for separation, it is altogether insufficient now they are growing to manhood, now that in the life of some of those now living we may expect to see them equalling our population. It is quite insufficient, if Britons throughout the world are to rise to the splendid conception of a united family of kindred states.

It is not loyalty which is wanted, it is organisation. It is necessary for the existence of an Empire such as ours that its several parts should go forward, each, indeed, fulfilling its own independent position, but at the same time able to count upon mutual support whenever interests which in their nature are mutual are threatened by any foe. If that cannot be secured, what follows? Then each of these States, without regard to the others, must fend for itself—must make its own preparation and its own defence. In

such a case, is it not certain that not only will it offer more temptation for attack, either in commercial warfare, or in some other kind of warfare, but that it will be much less able to meet attack than if all these states stood together ?

I say we want a constructive policy. During my long stay at the Colonial Office I had more opportunities than most men to meet and consult with the most distinguished of our colonial statesmen ; and, needless to say, this matter of closer union was the one which most interested us, which most absorbed our thoughts. I found very soon that these men agreed that all progress must be gradual, and that the line of least resistance would be a commercial union on the basis of preference between ourselves and our kinsmen. They thought, as, indeed, I think, that a policy of that kind would strengthen every part of the Empire, and would be the fitting preface for further progress in the same direction. They showed their sincerity by offering to us a preference upon most of the articles which we desired to send to their country. They did it voluntarily ; they did it without asking for any return ; and it is mean and contemptible and unworthy to say that what they are seeking is to gain at the expense of Great Britain some personal advantage for themselves. If that had been their object it would have been wiser to keep back the preference which they have given, to keep it in their hands, and to say : ‘ If you will do something in return, we will do this for you.’ But, on the contrary, they gave us all that their people would allow them to offer without asking anything in return.

But then they did not stop there : they made us another offer. What was their offer ? I will give it, not in my words, but in the words of the Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada, of Sir Wilfrid Laurier himself, whom, now, forsooth, the Free Importers are claiming as a supporter to their own selfish policy. Sir Wilfrid said, speaking just before the recent election : ‘ My vindication of the preference policy was given not at Ottawa, or on Canadian soil, but in the heart of the Empire, in London, at the Colonial Conference, when I declared to the Empire that I and my colleagues of the

Government were ready to make a trade treaty. I said : We are ready to discuss with you articles on which we can give you a preference and articles on which you can give us a preference ; we are ready to make with you a treaty of trade.' That was the offer which Sir Wilfrid Laurier made to us, and which was confirmed to us by the Prime Ministers of other states ; and I thought then, as I think now, that we ought not to have lost a moment in accepting it. We should then have proceeded to arrange the details ; and it seems to me that for friends and brothers meeting in such a conference there would have been no difficulty whatever in arranging a treaty, which, like all bargains that are worth considering, would be beneficial to both sides, and not to one alone.

Now, I warn you and the people of this country that, if you refuse, there are other nations not so pedantic as ours, who will be very ready to step into our places. Our opponents pretend to disbelieve that there was any offer of treaty, and they are quite certain that if there were an offer, it would be one which would be ruinous to this country, and which would be made in the hope of benefiting the colonies at our expense. How ungracious, how unreasonable, how mischievous that line of argument is I will not stop to consider ; but we want to satisfy as many as we can. We shall never satisfy the leaders of the Radical party, but we may satisfy a good number of their followers. Here is this doubt assiduously promulgated by those hostile to change. How can we remove it ?

There is only one way. I said to the House of Commons last April : ' You will not take my word or the word of the Prime Ministers themselves. There is only one way to convince your unbelief. Call a conference ; allow the colonists to speak for themselves ; then you will know whether they want Preference, and what they will offer in return.'

Within the last few weeks an important change has taken place in the whole political situation. The Prime Minister has asked the people for a mandate to call this conference

with the colonies in order to discuss freely and openly, without any restriction, this subject of Preference, and any other subject which either the people of this country or the people of the colonies may have to bring up for consideration. You would think that an honest and straightforward Opposition would have been placated by such a statement. We have no doubt of the result, but in order to meet the doubts of the Opposition, we have expressed our willingness to put things to the test by calling a conference. We know that if the people of the colonies accept the invitation, it will show that they desire Preference. We shall know from the conference what they can give us, and what we can give them, and whether their offer is worth our attention.

But what say our opponents? They begin to scream louder than ever that this is intended as an insidious undermining of the prosperity of this country. 'What!' they cry. 'Call a conference to discuss matters with your own colonies! Why, that would be to break up the Empire. We have no objection,' they say, 'to a conference provided that you exclude from its purview everything in which they are chiefly interested.'

Here is this question of Preference, which is the offer of the colonists themselves. They offered to make a treaty. Here is the matter which has given rise to the whole discussion. 'Have a conference by all means, but let that matter be excluded. Have a conference by all means, but take care it is muzzled before it meets.' What a monstrous pretension! I suppose that the Opposition would make—none more ready—a treaty of commerce or of anything else with France, with Germany, with the King of the Cannibal Islands, and they would not fear the consequences. But they dare not trust themselves in the same room with their own children lest they should come to blows.

It would be the most amusing thing in politics but for possibilities which I do not like to contemplate. A few years ago you had a great statesman writing his serious opinion that, if Great Britain got into any trouble, there was no free colony that would raise a finger to help us or spend a penny

in defence of our interests. Yet only yesterday, when, indeed, there was one of those periodical crises in our fate, who was it—when all the rest of the world was looking on with eager hope for our defeat and disaster—who was it who supported us, in the first place, with the moral strength which is given by the sympathy of a great and an independent democracy? Who was it who, not content with that alone, poured out their blood and spent their treasure? And yet these men to whom we owe so much, these men who helped to make us what we are, and who mainly helped to create the Empire of which we are so proud—these men we are to treat as suppliants for our grace, telling them at the same time that we suspect their motives, that we know that, unless they get everything and give us nothing, only division and conflict can arise. That is not my idea of a true Imperialism. The same people who make these disgraceful suggestions will tell you in the next breath how loyal the colonies are. How long do you think they will remain loyal if their loyalty is reciprocated in such a spirit? What is the result? I suppose if our opponents could make a treaty with any of these foreign powers, the world itself would not be large enough to contain them; they would swell so with pride and satisfaction. But they will drape themselves in sackcloth and ashes, and will moan away their lives in ‘squalid bonds,’ if we can make a treaty with our own kinsfolk, with our own best customers, . . . by which every man within the Empire shall have better treatment from his fellow-subjects than they gave to the foreigners, by which the manufacturer of the United Kingdom shall be placed at least on equal terms with his foreign competitor, and by which the British workman shall be secured from what is now his urgent and most pressing danger—from being ousted from his legitimate employment by the unfair competition of underpaid labour.

TARIFF REFORM AND THE COTTON TRADE

PRESTON, JANUARY 11, 1905

YOUR chairman has said—and I agree with every word he has said—that he wished this matter had been conducted entirely apart from party politics. I have done my best, I think I may truly say, to secure that result. I am no longer a member of the Government. I do not suppose that anybody believes that I am anxious to undertake office again. I do not think it is probable that I shall do so, certainly not unless by so doing I can advance the great cause to which I have devoted the remainder of my strength and life.

Now I have an advantage on the present occasion which I have never had before during the course of this campaign. Hitherto whenever I have spoken anywhere, curiously enough, by some coincidence which I do not explain, a distinguished member of the Opposition, or a distinguished member of that restricted but eminent body the Free Food League, has been sent down to answer me and to have the last word. To-night the situation is changed. Mr. Asquith has been before me, and it is my business to answer him. I am glad of the opportunity. . . . My difficulty with Mr. Asquith has always been this—that he approaches this question from a totally different standpoint. This is where the lawyer comes in. He approaches it from the standpoint of a lawyer. I approach it from the standpoint of a man of business. . . . The great profession to which he belongs is a profession of advocates. It is their duty—and it is their great glory that they have so admirably performed it—to speak from a brief, and to make the best case they can for their clients, and it is not their duty to examine into the merits of the case. They have to do the best they can whether their client is guilty or innocent.

I might give you an illustration of this at the beginning. What is the origin and the foundation of the proposals which I have ventured to lay before my countrymen and of the

arguments by which I have supported them? There are two. In the first place, I have said that the broad experience of the last thirty years has shown that British trade is on a less secure basis than it was formerly. I have pointed out that the circumstances during the last thirty years have changed to our disadvantage, and I have argued from that that where circumstances change the theory of the system has changed likewise. Then, in the second place, I have said that what we call the Empire—which is not yet an Empire in the true sense of the word—must be strengthened and organised if we as a part of that Empire are to hold our heads high, as we have done in the past, and if we are to take a part not inferior to any in the progress of the world. And in order to secure that result my text has been the words of one of the greatest of our colonial statesmen, a man not interested in our politics, and speaking, therefore, with no reference to party considerations, one of the greatest of our colonial statesmen and a representative of our greatest colony—Sir Wilfrid Laurier, when he said, ‘If we do not come closer together we must inevitably drift apart.’

Now what is Mr. Asquith’s answer? Well, he goes to his brief. The first thing he finds there is, ‘abuse the plaintiff’s attorney.’ He delights to describe myself and those who think with me as Protectionists. Now I don’t care one farthing what he calls me, provided that you, the people of this country, understand what I am. When I began this campaign in Glasgow, and at Birmingham before that, I said I was not a Protectionist. I mean, of course, in the accepted sense of the word. A Protectionist is now understood to mean a person who wants to go back to the system which was in vogue before the beginning of our present free-trade policy. If that is to be a Protectionist, then I am justified in repudiating the term. I do not want to go back, but I want you to amend the system and reform the system in proportion as the circumstances which made the system possible have since changed.

. . . From the beginning, the first object of this movement in my mind, as far as it concerned domestic conditions,

was to secure more employment at fair wages for the working men of this country. That is the only thing for which it is worth while to labour ; and in support of that I can quote more than one authority. I remember a statement of one of the older economists. I think it was the late Mr. Thorold Rogers, who was considered a very extreme Radical. He said the true test of the prosperity of the country—I am not quoting his exact words—is not whether a country is growing richer or poorer, but what is its product in men, and the number and proportion of its population which it can keep in comfort and happiness, and for which it can find remunerative employment.

I have quoted a Radical. I want to quote a Conservative as well. I think that the name I am going to mention must be familiar to you, and that Mr. Ecroyd still has many friends in Lancashire. He was ahead of all of us. I confess I differed from him entirely at the time he put forward his proposals ; I will not say even now—you can hardly ask me to confess it—that he was not a little premature ; but that he was on the right lines I have no doubt whatever, and the prophecies which he made had a much greater success than those of other and more pretentious prophets. But what he said was that cheap foreign food will avail our people nothing unless it can be obtained in exchange for the fruits of their own industry, for the workmen whose forges and looms are brought to a stand by hostile tariffs may yet starve in the midst of unprecedented abundance. If Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman¹ is an authority, there are thirteen million people in this country who can say that Mr. Ecroyd's predictions have come true.

I have said that the exports of last year were a record ; the increase in those exports has already been shown to be chiefly due to the rise in the price of certain raw material, and especially of cotton. Cotton has cost so much more to grow that it has been put at a higher price—has cost so much more to buy. Exports that would have been worth so

¹ i.e. in stating that thirteen million people in this country were perpetually on the verge of starvation.

many millions are worth so many more millions in proportion to the additional cost. Yes, but has that found you any more employment if you have made exactly the same amount of cotton goods or cotton yarn? Have you been benefited by the fact that owing to the rise in the raw material the price of cotton has gone up and exports of cotton have apparently increased in value, although they have not increased in volume? No, you derive no advantage whatever from that rise in price and that increase in the exports. You have positively suffered by it, because you have been during the season, when the high prices ruled, on short time, and you have done less business, and in every way the whole thing has acted to your disadvantage.

But there is one point in connection with this which I would like to impress upon you. During the time that cotton has been so high you have been on short time, you have consumed much less cotton, but during all the short time the protected States have consumed more cotton. How do you account for that? I have been asked a great number of questions; it is time, perhaps, that I asked some in my turn. How is it that those protected States, who by every argument that the Free Importers use ought to be ruined, have been doing more work than you in these late hard times?

But, now, has the increase in our exports—this is another important question—been greater or less in proportion than the increase in other countries? Here is another opportunity for contradiction. I say it is less. Now, if that is so, even a *bona fide* increase in our trade would not be satisfactory. If we are to hold our comparative position we must have as large a share of the increase in the trade of the world as any other country. If we are merely holding our own, that means that we are being passed. The effect of that I need not dwell upon. Now it is necessary that we should analyse these exports very closely. I have pointed out that Mr. Asquith is misled because he does not analyse the exports. We ought to know something of their char-

acter and something of their direction, that is, of the places to which they are going.

Now I go back to Mr. Cobden's theory. I have a great respect for Mr. Cobden, who was a man of business, who was absolutely sincere, who propounded a policy with great courage and patience, which he carried at last to a successful conclusion, and most of whose statements in regard to his policy proved to be true for a period of something like thirty years. Since that time circumstances have entirely changed, and if Mr. Cobden were still alive I cannot help thinking that as a man of business he would have changed his policy also. But, at all events, Mr. Cobden had a distinct idea of what the result of his free trade policy would be. He thought that our country would exchange with every other country the goods which they were most fitted to produce. He thought that this country, which, in his opinion, was most fitted to produce manufactures, would exchange manufactures with all the rest of the world for raw material. That turned out true for a long while. At that time all the foreigners were at a disadvantage in comparison with us. We had a special position, we had a practical monopoly, and we did exchange our cotton for raw material with all those countries. But now how does it stand? At the present moment these protected foreigners—who ought to have been ruined long ago, because they have adopted those pernicious principles which I am urging upon your attention—are sending more and more of their manufactured goods to us, and we are sending less and less of our manufactured goods to them.

Now this kind of exchange is not satisfactory. It brings me to another fallacy of Mr. Asquith's. He told you at Preston what was true—that every pound of import was balanced by a pound of export. That must be true; but let us look into it a little closer. By what kind of export is the import balanced? The real test is this—if we import something which is equivalent to a pound of labour, a pound of wages—when we come to export, do we export the equivalent of a pound of wages? I hope the working men who are

here, who have honoured me by their presence, will understand the importance of this. To exchange a pound of import for a pound of export is all right for the capitalist, for the manufacturer, for those more fortunate classes in the community whom I am accused of desiring to make richer ; but it is a very bad thing for the working man—if he does not get an equivalent in the shape of labour for every pound that comes into this country, then he is a loser by every pound.

It is so important that you will excuse me if I dwell upon it. Take an illustration. Suppose the foreigner sends us a motor-car worth £200. There may be only £100 worth of foreign labour, which, as far as it goes, takes out of the mouths of our workmen the bread that £100 of wages would give them. But if in return for the motor-car we send to this foreigner £200 worth of finished cotton, very likely there is £100 worth of labour there also. It is a fair exchange. That is free trade, that is the real free trade. We have no objection to an exchange of that kind ; the more of it we can gain the better we shall be pleased ; we look upon imports of that kind with the same generous appreciation which Mr. Asquith shows for imports of a totally different kind,

For what is the fact ? The motor-car is not paid for by cotton, or by other manufactured goods, or, at all events, only a portion of it. In order to prove that there is one pound of exports for one of imports Mr. Asquith has to go to invisible exports. Well, there are a good many people quite as clever probably as I am who are considerably mystified at this. This is how I understand it. These invisible exports consist of two things. In the first place, freight, shipping freight export and import, and commission of merchants ; and, in the second place, the receipts of our investments abroad. Very well, the British workman has lost £100 worth of labour by that motor-car. In return he is getting something in the shape of the labour on the manufactured exports, which help to pay for the car. But a large part of the cost is paid by invisible exports. What

does the British workman get out of them ? He gets very little. The wages in the shipping trade are, I am sorry to say, a small and diminishing quantity—wages paid, that is, to British seamen—and as for the returns from investments, there is no labour in them at all ; and accordingly, the motor-car is paid for half in visible and half in invisible exports, the workman loses nearly half the amount he would have received in wages if this car had been made in England. It is perfectly right for the capitalist, perfectly right for the banker, perfectly right for the commission agent, and perfectly right for the man who lives on his income which his father before him, perhaps, had made abroad ; but it is a very bad thing for the workmen of this country. It perhaps accounts for the fact that, while we are so rich, while the income-tax is going up every day, there is more and more unemployment and thirteen millions of people are on the verge of hunger.

Now, I have given, I hope, Mr. Asquith something to think about. I could put to him, not merely one question, but a whole catechism upon this point alone. Anyway, this is the result. Our export of manufactures, which provides the greatest employment—it does provide employment, and it is not like invisible exports—during the last thirty years, has shown a continuous tendency to decrease in the case of the foreign protected countries. Wherever the foreigner has raised a tariff, our visible exports of manufactures to them have gone down continuously. That is the first thing I want you to keep in your minds.

On the other hand, those foreign countries—do not forget that they ought to have been ruined !—those foreign protected countries have during the same period of thirty years continuously—perhaps with slight fluctuations but still continuously—sent us more and more manufactures. The British labour which has gone to those protected countries has become less. The foreign labour which has been exported to this country has become more. How much longer can you go on if that sort of thing is to continue ?

If it continues, you must as a matter of course lose all your

trade to these protected foreign countries, and on the other hand they will take more and more employment out of your hands. It is a double process. You send less; they send more. You are losing both ways, and I ask for a remedy. How is this to be prevented? You are not ruined at present. A great number of people have been ruined, but to those who are ruined we are like the Pharisee—we pass them by on the other side. And again I say, what is the remedy?

Mr. Asquith gave you the other night the example of Switzerland. I think his clients were wrong in suggesting he should take such an illustration as that; but at all events I am thankful to him for it. Switzerland is a very pretty illustration of what I have been telling you. It is an extraordinarily active, energetic country; the amount of its trade is very large in proportion to its population. How does it stand with regard to us and to other countries?

Switzerland takes from us one-third of what she sells to us. She sends us three motor-cars for one that we send to her. That does not seem a very profitable bargain for us. What does she do with other countries? All these things are comparative. When you come to Germany you find that Germany sells to Switzerland twice as much as she buys. So the case is quite different. Switzerland sends one motor-car and has to buy two in return. I prefer the position of Germany. In the case of France, the same thing. France also sends nearly twice as much to Switzerland as she buys from Switzerland. And if you come to the actual figures of trade, you will find we in Great Britain send to Switzerland £2,250,000 worth, France sends £9,000,000, that is, four times as much, Germany sends £14,250,000, that is to say, more than six times as much as we do. Will you keep that in your minds? Remember, France and Germany are protected countries. How does it come about that these countries are able to do so much better than we are?

Instead of the protected countries being in a worse position than we are, they seem in all these respects to be in a much better position. Mr. Asquith's remedy really is difficult to

consider seriously. What did he tell you ? He said that, in order to gain your proper proportion of the trade in Switzerland you were to invoice your goods in francs, and we should send out 4500 travellers to meet the German competitor. Let him tell that to your Chamber of Commerce. Let him ask either merchants or manufacturers. I think they will tell him that there may be alterations advantageously made in this system of business, but I do not think a solitary individual would approve the proposal to send 4500 travellers to compete with the Germans, who do already nearly seven times more than we do. It is perfectly clear that a suggestion of that kind cannot come from a man of business. It is no remedy at all against prohibitive tariffs. You can have as many travellers as you like, but if your goods are much dearer than those of our competitors, they will not do much good for you. It is not a remedy against preferential conditions. It so happens that the Swiss give advantages to neighbour nations, to Germany, France, and to Austria, which they have hitherto refused to extend freely to us.

But what is the remedy ? I say again I happen to have been in correspondence, personal or in writing, with a good number of Swiss manufacturers and gentlemen employed in that trade, and I have found a singular unanimity in their opinions. One gentleman, for instance, who employs a very large number of work-people, said to me, ' If your proposals are going to be carried, and if you want free trade with Switzerland, we cannot get on without your market.' Another gentleman said, ' You complain of this preferential treatment, and that you can get no redress. Why do not you put 10 per cent. upon Swiss watches ? You will not have any cause to complain then.' The third gentleman, taking a different line, said, ' If your proposals succeed, I have made up my mind what I am going to do. I am going to transfer my factory to England.' Well, I am bound to confess if he does that it might not be much advantage to the manufacturers here, but it is a distinct advantage to the working men, because here he will employ English working

men instead of Swiss. Now, that is the policy of retaliation. That is the policy which Mr. Asquith told you was impossible and injurious. I prefer an ounce of fact to any number of tons of theory, even when the theory comes from the Cobden Club, and when it is supported by so great an advocate as Mr. Asquith. If, gentlemen, you want to increase your trade you must compel it. You will not get this increase because of your good looks. You will not get it because you are so popular on the Continent that they will make sacrifices for you. You will get it only because you are strongest. And the issue depends entirely on whether you are ready to use your strength.

Mr. Asquith very naturally and very properly has given a good deal of time to the consideration of the position of the cotton trade. Personally, I rather regret having to devote so much time to the question of what the advantage would be to a particular trade. I have been asked by letter and in person to explain exactly how it is going to affect the most extraordinary industries. I have been asked to say how it is going to affect tin-wire goods; but perhaps the most interesting of all was when I received a most serious request that I would tell the writer how the costermonger of the East End would be affected. It is very natural; but I admit I would much rather treat the whole question as it affects the country, and then I would leave it to the people who are experts in each locality to explain to their people in what way they would be affected. It is impossible to prove with absolute certainty what would happen to the trades of this country in hypothetical cases. The operations of trade are too complicated for anything of the sort. What I can do is to say what the general result must be of a change over the whole country.

But I admit that cotton is really an exceptional case. It is not merely that it is the greatest of our industries except agricultural, but it is also that the circumstances of the cotton trade are exceptional. I do not think there is any other large trade of which the same thing can be said. If you look on the trade of the country generally, you will find,

as Mr. Asquith told you, that the home trade is probably four or five times as large and important as the foreign oversea trade. Exactly the reverse is the case with cotton. In cotton the home trade is only one-fourth, or about that proportion of the foreign trade. What follows in that case ? It is that in your trade the principal thing you have to look to is the foreign trade. You depend upon the foreign trade ; and if anything happens to the foreign trade, no advantage you can expect in the home trade will bring about the balance. That, I think, is accepted by our opponents ; and it is equally clear to me. You have, in looking to the future, to see that your foreign trade not merely remains on its present basis, but that it continues to increase in proportion to the increase of your population. If that does not happen, you must know that you are only preparing misery and suffering for your descendants. The first question I want to ask you is—have you satisfied yourselves that the conditions of the cotton trade are satisfactory ? Are they good now, and are they favourable for the future ?

Now, again, I refer to Mr. Cobden. Mr. Cobden's doctrine, as you remember, was that you had a special aptitude. You had a climate which was favourable for the manufacture. You had exceptional skill ; you had the best machinery ; and you had any amount of capital. But now can you say the same thing ? Who are your competitors ? You have the Southern States of America, you have Japan, you have all the protected States, you have China and India, both of which are producing to a certain extent for themselves. Now in some of these cases, in the protected States, for instance, they have the same machinery, the same skill, and they have a sufficient amount of capital ; and you in Lancashire during the last thirty years have been educating them with the teaching which they require, and helping them with the skill, with the machinery, and in some cases with the capital ; and now, therefore, they are, as their trade shows, on an equality with you. When you come to Japan and the Southern States of America, there you will have to deal with labour cheaper than you have hitherto encountered. The

Southern States have a negro population, and Japan, as we know, an industrious, educated, and thrifty population, which combines the greatest possible technical skill with the highest power of scientific inventions. These are your competitors for the future, even if everything had been all right up to the present time. I admit that, if I were interested in the cotton trade directly, I should feel some cause for anxiety. But it is not only the future—what about the past ? •

I have some figures here which are very significant and suggestive. In the ten years 1876 to 1885—you see I have taken a sufficient period to avoid all Mr. Asquith's criticisms as to my selection—the proportion of the world's supply of cotton which was consumed by Great Britain was 41 per cent. The Continent took $35\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; the United States took $23\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Great Britain was easily first in the race. In the second period—1886 to 1895, also ten years—Great Britain had fallen to $35\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; the Continent had risen to 39 per cent.; the United States of America had risen to $25\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; and now Great Britain was second. But when you come to the last period of eight years, 1896 to 1903—that is the last period for which we have any record—Great Britain has again fallen to $28\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; the Continent has again risen to $41\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; the United States has risen to 30 per cent.; so that Great Britain is third where she was first. Is that satisfactory ? That is the only admission I wish at present. Then I go to some other figures. I got the census returns from the official book. In 1901—that is the last in which the census was taken—the total number of persons employed in the cotton trade was 546,000, against 565,000 at the previous census. That shows a diminution of 19,000 people employed, whereas, according to population, they ought to have been increased. Is that satisfactory ? •

Now I come to the statements which were contradicted. I am not going to quote the figures, they are too complicated, too long; but I will give them to Mr. Asquith with the greatest pleasure if he wishes to see them. What has

happened during the last few years with regard to the cotton trade ? From 1892 to 1903, the export of cotton piece goods from the United Kingdom to all markets has been practically stationary. There have been fluctuations, but practically it has not increased. The exports of cotton yarn have very considerably diminished. Is that satisfactory ? Is it satisfactory to know that our trade was diminished in one of its important features and remains stationary over a period of years in the other ?

But then, while you have been stationary, what have your competitors been doing ? They have not remained stationary. We cannot expect more than our fair proportion, but we have not had our fair proportion. In the time of which I have spoken, while the trade of the world has enormously increased, and while our trade has been practically stationary, Germany, Austria, France, the United States—the ‘principal protected countries,’ as defined in the official returns of the Board of Trade—have increased their export trade more than 50 per cent., and it now amounts to £35,000,000. Mr. Asquith tells you that your trade is still larger than theirs. ‘Yes ; but go back a few years and see the rate at which they are catching you up. How long do you think your trade will be still greater than theirs ? Theirs has already increased so greatly. There is another point about these figures. This enormous increase extends to every class of market. It extends to the neutral markets—including China, the British colonies and possessions, including India ; it even extends to the United Kingdom. Every one of those protected countries is increasing its trade much more rapidly than you are. Mr. Asquith asserted when he was here that Protection, as he calls it, would be fatal to your trade in neutral markets. Yes ! but I have shown you that in other countries, where Protection is very much greater than anything I have ever suggested, trade has not decreased, but increased in a much greater proportion than yours.

Mr. Asquith’s statement is pure theory. I say the facts show that he is mistaken. Things do not happen as he says

they will happen, and as, no doubt, he thinks they ought to happen.

I come back to what I said. Your proportion of the world's trade is rapidly diminishing, your hold on neutral markets is threatened, not only by new competitors. That would be a different thing altogether. If Japan comes in and takes China from you, that raises a different argument altogether. But your trade is being taken from you in these neutral markets by your foreign protected competitors. Well, I agree with those who answered my inquiries just now, that this is an unsatisfactory position.

The question I ask Mr. Asquith is, What is his remedy ? He talked about striking out in new paths. I have read all his speeches, and I cannot find in any one of them, least of all in the speech he delivered to you, anything in the shape of a new path that it would be worth the while of any sensible man to follow. Of course, he talked about the necessity of technical education and greater technical skill. Does he mean to say that the people of Lancashire have less skill at the present time than their competitors ? No ; in my opinion, though their competitors may run them very closely, and some of them may be as good, no one has yet surpassed them. Then he talked of increased sources of supply. Yes, there are many reasons why you should wish for increased sources of supply, and I will tell you that one result of my policy would be that you would enormously stimulate those sources. But an increase in these sources of supply would be just as important for your competitors as it would be for yourselves. If cotton is cheap here, it will also be cheap in Germany ; and you would have no special advantage there. Then he spoke of a reduction of freights, but you cannot expect shipowners to take less than what they consider a fair price. He cannot give them a bounty, because that would be cutting at the very roots of Free Trade. There is only one way in which you can get a reduction in freight, and that, again, is mine. You may increase your trade in your colonies. If you so arrange matters that for every cargo of cotton that comes from

them here, or even from the United States here, an equal cargo goes back to the country from which the cargo comes, then you will have in the future two cargoes where you now have one, and the freight can easily be reduced in proportion.

Then Mr. Asquith let fall an observation to which I call your particular attention, and which I thought a very ominous one. He said one of the necessities of your prosperity was cheap labour. I wonder whether you noticed it. He explained it. He seemed at once to have seen that a statement of that kind might give rise to trouble, and, accordingly, he explained that he did not mean low wages, but he meant cheap food and luxuries and comfort. Well, so do I; but that is no explanation at all of his allusion to cheap labour, unless he means that when he has given you cheap food and cheap luxuries and cheap comfort, that then you will consent to take a lower rate of wages. In that case I do not see where you will be benefited, for, if you are going to lose on your wage all you gain on your food, it seems to me, according to the laws of arithmetic, you will be much where you were when you began.

I have said this is an ominous allusion. Remember, it is pure Cobdenism. My late colleague and friend Mr. Bright wrote a letter, which I remember well, to an American manufacturer. In that he attacked Protection with his usual vigour, but he said in his letter to this manufacturer that he warned him that if he had Protection he would have to pay higher wages. That is perfectly true, and it has proved to be true; but is the converse true? If you do not have Protection, are you to have lower wages? Because that is what Mr. Asquith's remark undoubtedly pointed to. You have been filled up with figures on the subject. I could produce figures, if necessary, on the other side. I must content myself to-night with an assertion. I assert that in all the protected countries wages have gone up in a higher proportion than wages in this country.

You will see at once that there can be no remedy at all for the state of things I have described to you in such proposals

as those of Mr. Asquith. You will not save yourselves by increasing sources of supply, by a reduction in freights, or even by cheap labour. What are my remedies? They are very simple. I propose to increase your trade with the foreign protected countries by securing a revision of their tariffs. As long as their tariffs are what they are, you cannot largely increase your trade to them. But I believe, with the Swiss manufacturer and other foreign manufacturers who have discussed this matter with me, that the result of saying to the Governments of those foreign countries, 'If you continue your exclusive and prohibitive tariffs we will pay you in your own coin,' will at once be a considerable amendment.

My remedy will also prevent dumping. Dumping, Mr. Asquith says, is a nightmare. Dumping, he even goes so far as to say, is a blessing in disguise. It is so much disguised that I cannot recognise the blessing. At the present moment in the cotton trade you have not got much dumping. Do not be foolish enough to believe that because your time has not come yet it will not come. There is some dumping, but I believe it is almost entirely confined to some of the finished goods. Although there is not much dumping in the home trade, there is a good deal of dumping in the neutral markets. If my proposals are adopted, we shall put it out of the power of these foreign manufacturers to carry out a system which, in my opinion, is the most insidious, the most successful, the most dangerous invention for destroying a competitor that the world has yet seen.

Then, gentlemen, I propose by a reasonable preference to obtain from the colonies equivalent concessions by which the market of the colonies will be secured, at all events in a large proportion, to you. And if you think at the present time the market of the colonies is small by the side of other markets, remember that we are only at the beginning of the growth of the Empire. Within the last few years we have seen the extraordinary start which our greatest colonies have taken. It may be that within the lifetime of people here present to-night you will see their population multiplied five, or even tenfold. You have the greatest and the most

quickly growing market in the world. Secure it by bonds of steel, by bonds that are both of sentiment and of interest. Secure that while you can, or you or your descendants will regret your indecision for ever after.

PREFERENCE, THE TRUE IMPERIAL POLICY

GAINSBOROUGH, FEBRUARY 1, 1905

I AM glad that I am not here on any party campaign, and I do not think that even my worst enemy—if I have such a person—would accuse me of seeking any party or personal gain in the great controversy in which I have engaged. Believe me, if I wish anything now, it is that I might find the words to impress upon this great meeting of men of all parties my intense conviction of the importance of the subject we are met to discuss.

I look back to my own political career, extending over thirty years, and I can see that from first to last two objects have presented themselves to my mind as the most important that can or could be dealt with by any statesman of any party. The first of these objects is the consideration of what is called the condition of the people; I mean to say the consideration of all the legislation, or suggestions, or changes, that may be made in order to improve the condition of the people, to elevate their lives, to give them, and especially the poorest of them, a better chance in the competition which is always going on. And, in the second place, what has most interested me has been a consideration of the future of the country, of the future of the Empire of which the country forms a part.

We all have our lives given to us no doubt for a good purpose; but the life of the individual, what is that to the life of the nation? Every one of us is bound by the highest of responsibilities to think, not only of himself, but also of his descendants, of his country, the life of which may be prolonged for generations after he has ceased to be in existence.

Now this question about which I am going to speak to you is closely connected with both these objects. We are agreed—by we, I mean my opponents and myself—that this subject, whether my views about it are right or are wrong, touches every man, woman, and child in the kingdom ; that it affects your families ; that it will seriously influence your power to provide for them ; that it affects the general course of life of the whole of the population of this country. It affects the Empire. It affects the life of the Empire, and the existence of the Empire ; for that depends upon our ability in the next few years—in what is a mere nothing in the life of a nation—to devise a means by which this Empire, in which all of us feel the greatest pride, may be kept together in one united whole.

Now what is this Empire of ours ? We are brought face to face with the greatest problem that has ever been presented to a nation. It is a new problem. We have no particular experience to go by, but there has been thrown upon us, as I believe, in the providence of God, a responsibility such as has never been placed upon any nation or any race before. We have to discover how to bring together in a great union of peace and affection territories vaster than have ever owned any common interest before. We have to unite varying races, varying interests, and different aspirations, and we have to make of them an organised whole.

We all talk of the British Empire. I think my countrymen are only just beginning—they have not got very far—to appreciate what it is. It is not an empire. We use that word ; but it is not an empire in the sense in which other empires have existed on this globe. It is not an empire in the sense in which the German Empire now dominates a great portion of Europe. It is not a union in the sense in which there is union in the United States of America. It is not even a kingdom in the sense in which, let us say, Italy, with all her varying races and interests, has been united for common purposes. It is a great potentiality, the greatest that was ever given to man. But for the moment

it is a loose bundle of sticks, bound together, indeed, by a thin tie of sentiment and sympathy, but a tie, after all, so slender that a rough blow might shatter it and dissolve it into its constituent elements.

Let us go back for a moment into our past history. Let us consider how this Empire has been built up. How do we—we in these two small islands—come to have this gigantic heritage, and with it, remember, these gigantic responsibilities, which are unknown in the case of other nations? The British Empire—bear this always in mind—was acquired by sacrifice from first to last. It was won by sacrifice. It can only be maintained by sacrifice. Partly it is the result of conquest and of war, and of all the sufferings that war brings; partly the result of discovery, the work of pioneers, men of courage and resolution, the men of whom we are most proud in the course of our history who obtained in the name of England a position which was not disputed, but which involved them, at any rate, in the greatest of hardships.

This Empire so acquired has been growing until it has become greater than anything that was ever known before. We talk of great empires, we talk of Rome and Constantinople in the past; we talk of modern empires, of Russia, of the great confederation of the United States. They are nothing by comparison with the inheritance which has devolved upon us, and with which we have now to deal. I am not prepared to say that we have any right to be proud of all the steps that have been taken in the acquisition of this Empire. I would go further, and say that, in the first instance, although its acquisition was accompanied by deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice to which you will hardly find elsewhere any parallel, yet the main object was the selfish object of acquiring a territory in the sense of a possession, in the sense of an estate which was to be ours, and the revenues of which were to be more or less at our disposal. That was the early history of our Colonial Empire; and that disappeared at a stroke. It disappeared absolutely and for ever when the Declaration of Independence was pro-

mulgated in America, and when what was then the greatest of our colonies repudiated altogether its political connection with the mother country.

But mark what followed. The original conception of a Colonial Empire was a possession, something which gave us privileges but involved no corresponding duties. When that was destroyed, then we fell into the opposite extreme. We could see no gain and direct advantage from these distant lands, and our statesmen, or many of the most distinguished of them, came to believe that it would be better to get rid of the responsibility. I think you may safely say that for fifty years—a period including, let me remind you, what is called the Free Trade period—the object of the statesmen of this country was to relieve themselves of the burden, instead of endeavouring to meet a new situation with new methods and with higher aspirations.

I said in a parenthesis that this period included what may be called the Free Trade period. I am not going to dwell upon it now, but it is a fact which you should always bear in mind, that the party which worked for Free Trade was, on the whole, a cosmopolitan party, that is to say, a party whose patriotism is as wide as the world—not confined to their own country, or even to their own Empire. For instance, you find Mr. Cobden—for whom I have always expressed the greatest respect; I think him to have been in part mistaken, but I have never doubted his honesty, his sincerity, or his ability—you find Mr. Cobden, in the height of the agitation, explaining frankly, as he always did, that to him a Colonial Empire was not at all an object of ambition; that he rejoiced in the federation of Canada, because he hoped that it would lead to the speedy independence of Canada; that he detested our rule in India; that he thought it almost a crime that we should make ourselves answerable for that great dependency.

Now, I am not going to argue that question, because it has been settled long ago. As regards the position of the Empire, posterity has given judgment against Mr. Cobden. And I do not think you can find any one of responsibility—

be he Radical, be he Conservative, or be he Liberal Unionist—who would pretend to tell you that it would be a good thing if the Empire fell away from us, if we were once more, as in old times, an isolated kingdom of comparatively small extent.

If I refer to this at all, it is because I believe that you will find that in the present controversy the question of what is called Little Englandism—which is not a term of reproach : it only means a particular view of policy—is also closely connected with the doctrine of free imports. What one is in the financial sphere the other is in the political sphere. If you want an Empire, if you want influence in the world, I think you will find that free imports are inconsistent with them. But if you are one of those who hate the very name of Imperialism, as I think Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman said he did the other day, then I agree that you are consistent ; you are honest in saying that under those circumstances you see no reason for a change in our fiscal policy. The two go together, and it is part of my object to-night to show you in what way they are connected.

Meanwhile, I only say that the policy of the middle of the last century, the policy of neglecting the colonies, of being apathetic with regard to them, of governing your arrangements with a view to getting rid of them—amicably, of course—is, in my opinion, a selfish policy, a short-sighted policy, and not the policy of the people of this country to-day. I believe that it has given place in these recent years to a higher conception of Imperial duty. I think the people of this country recognise now that they have something to be proud of in the undoubted influence which is wielded by Great Britain in the affairs of the world, and which, though not universally, is generally used for the advantage of peace and civilisation. I think we recognise that that influence exists, that it is on the whole an instrument for good, and that that instrument would vanish in our hands, if we were no longer part of an empire, but only an isolated kingdom.

But that is not all. It is not only these high arguments which I want to present to you, although it is to them,

believe me, that I attach the greatest importance,—it is through them that I hope to touch your hearts ; but I would also appeal to you on the ground of your material interests. Suppose that, owing to your apathy or inability to understand the colonies, your children abroad and your kinsmen across the seas, the gulf which at present is only a physical gulf of sea and distance, gradually became a moral gulf, and they fell away from you ; your ideals no longer their ideals, and they being no longer proud of our common history, but looking forward only to a history to be made by themselves. Suppose all these things took place—and they are not impossible—then I ask you, What would be the first result ? How would you feel it ? These no doubt are sentimental considerations. You might harden your hearts and say, What matters it to us, provided we still have sufficient employment and sufficient wages ?

But you would not have sufficient employment and sufficient wages. You would feel it directly. You would lose your best customers, you would lose what is called in business your best trade connections. Now, if by any chance you weaken the ties which hold your colonies and yourselves together, you have a very heavy loss to fear. You will lose your most promising market. You will lose a market which is quite different from a foreign market, because it is the market of your own people. You have the same wants, the same ideas, the same currency, the same measures. In every way it is easier to trade with your own kinsfolk than it is to trade with foreigners ; and therefore that is the most hopeful part of your trade. That is the trade which would be immediately and seriously interfered with if anything occurred to produce a coolness between our colonies and ourselves.

What is the state of trade now ? At the present moment we are told that times are prosperous, and that the exports are records. That may be so ; but, meanwhile, the employment of the people in industrial and agricultural pursuits is not keeping pace with the population. If you go back twenty or thirty years you find a larger proportion of the

people in continuous and remunerative employment in our principal industries than there are to-day. Although it may be true that the country is getting richer, the number of the unemployed is getting greater. I shall return to that directly ; but that is not the only result.

I have spoken to you about Empire. If I had as many hours to speak to you as I have half-hours, I would say something more about the effect of the Empire upon the whole character of the people. Believe me, we should not be the people we are, we should not have had the qualities which, after all, make the name of Britain respected throughout the world, if we had remained a mere kingdom, and we had not taken these great responsibilities. But the burden is great ; and it may be that the time is coming when we shall no longer be able to bear it alone. Have you thought of that ? Who is going to help you when the burden becomes too great ? Do you think it will be these foreign countries whom you welcome to your markets with open arms ? Do you think that it is they who will help you in your time of stress ?

I think it was twenty years ago that one of the most distinguished of our Liberal statesmen ventured—which is always a mistake—upon a prophecy. He said that if in the future this country of ours were ever engaged in a great war in which the colonies were not directly and immediately concerned, they would not send one man to help us, and would not pay one penny towards the cost. Yes ; most prophets are false, and my friend, Mr. Morley, was no exception. What happened ? There came a time not long afterwards when we were in great stress, when we undertook a task, which, remember, was forced upon us, but upon the performance of which depended the existence of the Empire, the confidence of our fellow-subjects throughout the world. When we undertook that task, and when every one turned aside from us, when the foreigners carped at our ignorance and weakness, when they did not even hide their desire that we should be defeated, then the colonies, the relations, came to the front. Then we found that blood was thicker

than water. Then these men, so maligned, opened their purse to us. That was a small thing. But they gave us of their best to fight shoulder to shoulder with our own representatives. At a time when we stood the scorn of the civilised world, they came forward, and they came with no selfish and personal interest. They gave us their moral support because we were engaged in what they knew to be a just war.

Now that war has been called a stupid war. Well, I do not understand the adjective. I do not understand how any patriotic Englishman can come down after it has been fought, after it has been fought victoriously, when men have given their lives for it and endured all the hardships it involved, and tell an audience like this that it was a stupid war; that these lives were given in vain; that these sacrifices were of no account. But to me the war was a just war. To me it showed that the old British spirit was not dead amongst us, that we could still look forward to maintain that headship of the British race which we have maintained so long, and which some people have said was weakening in our hands. Be that as it may, one thing it did. It gave us experience. It showed us a new vista. It made possible an organised union of all the different parts of the British Empire for common objects.

Now, if you have followed me, you will see that the time is a critical and a creative time. I say that the position you have held hitherto cannot be permanently held unless you take your children into your counsels, and make the Empire theirs as well as yours. If that be done, then although it may be that the separate work of this kingdom may have ceased to be the guiding principle of the world, or of the civilisation in which we have taken part, yet our destiny may be continued and fulfilled in the British Empire, which will be sustained by the willing hands of all those who have contributed to make it.

You see what it is I am urging upon you. It falls upon you, the living generation, to maintain the Empire. Let us go a step further. The minds, not only of British statesmen, but of colonial statesmen, were directed by the late

war to consider the circumstances of our mutual relations. They considered these circumstances, and they did not find them satisfactory. You have to take that into your serious consideration. All these statesmen, speaking from different parts of the globe, under different conditions, governing great communities, very varied in their character, they all turned their minds in the same direction. They said, in effect, 'We see as we never saw before the potentialities and the obligations of the British Empire. How can we maintain that Empire?' They all came to the same conclusion. They said, 'It cannot be maintained on its present footing.' Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Prime Minister of Canada, said in a memorable speech, 'Either you must draw closer together, or you will inevitably drift apart.' The late Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. Deakin, said, 'There is no intelligent man who can view the present relations between the mother country and her colonies without anxiety and alarm.' The same thing was said in South Africa by the present Prime Minister of the Cape, and, above all, by the late Mr. Rhodes, to whom no one will deny the character of a broad-minded Englishman. Mr. Rhodes, writing not for popular information, but merely to his fellow Prime Ministers, at a time when he was Premier of the Cape—the Prime Ministers of Canada and of the Australian colonies—suggested, 'The object is to find some tie that will bind the Empire closer together. It must be a practical one.' That is the next point.

I have given you these names. I have not time to go further. Almost without exception every leading statesman in South Africa, in Australia, in New Zealand, in Canada, has said practically the same thing. But they have said more. They have all, thinking this matter out separately, come to the same conclusion—that a practical tie is only to be found in preferential arrangements between the mother country and her children. Now, they have not stopped there. Having come to the conclusion, without any pressure from us, separately, each in his own community, they proceed to give effect to it. They make us an offer. I

dare say many of you have been told that they have made no offer. I can deal with facts, but I cannot deal with the ineradicable stupidity of some people. When Sir Wilfrid Laurier says to you, as he has said, that 'we offer to meet you, and to make a treaty with you by which you shall treat us and we will treat you a little better than we both treat the foreigner,' I do not know any name in the English language that I can give to that statement except to call it an offer. And the offer which Sir Wilfrid Laurier made has been repeated again and again in different words, in different forms, always to the same effect, not only by the statesmen of Canada, whichever side of politics they are on, but also by the statesmen of the other self-governing colonies.

Now, gentlemen—and especially I want to appeal to those who on ordinary occasions would, I suppose, be my opponents—what do you think of the position? You are asked to make a treaty with our own people, and to discuss the terms of that treaty. At present you do not know what the details will be. They must be a matter of bargain in the first instance. The colonies may ask too much, or we may ask too much; or the colonies may give too little, or we may give too little. You are not asked to commit yourselves. You are not asked to shut your eyes and open your mouths, and take whatever the colonies propose to give you. But you are asked to meet your own friends and relations in a friendly meeting, and to say whether, both having the same object, namely, to unite the Empire more closely together, you can find some means of doing so on the basis of this preferential policy.

It would not be possible, but for this party system of ours (which is very good at times: I do not know myself how we are to do without it, but in times of crisis like this it is utterly out of place)—it would be impossible but for that system, that men on both sides should not say, as sensible men, as men of business, as patriots—'Certainly, we will meet you, and if we cannot agree, we will part friends.' Yet we find a great party in the State using all

its organisation and all its machinery to misrepresent the offer and the views of those who support it in this country, refusing to treat it as a non-party matter, and refusing discussion with your best friends. Why? Because, forsooth, it is possible—and I think it is probable—that when you come to discuss the matter together you may all be convinced that the time has come to change, at all events in some slight degree, the antiquated system which has been rejected by all the rest of the world, but which you have pursued for sixty years without the slightest alteration, although everything has changed around you. There was a time when a great argument was met by the shouts of the mob, who said, ‘Great is Diana of the Ephesians.’ It seems to me that our politics are to be governed by similar considerations. All sorts of old formulæ are to be brought out, as though they were a divinely inspired gospel.

What is the next step? The colonies offer to treat with you for further advantages. What have they done already? Are you aware that they have already given you a preference without asking anything from you in return, because they believe in this principle, and believe that your common-sense will induce you to carry it further when you have once had experience of it? South Africa has offered you 25 per cent. preference on the duties it levies, and New Zealand 10 per cent. Canada has been gradually increasing the amount, until it now offers you 33 per cent. preference on its duties. I appeal to you working men, have you followed the result of that? How has it affected you and your families? Addressing myself now purely to your selfish instincts, I ask, Has it helped you? [A Voice: No.] I wonder whether that gentleman knows how much it has helped the country. I should be very sorry if he were not himself the better for it, and I think he is, without knowing it. But if I had to choose between him and the country, I should choose the country.

That preference has increased your trade with Canada, chiefly in manufactures, by something between £5,000,000 and £6,000,000 a year. Do you know what that means?

Six millions a year of manufactures involves at least—I believe it is a great deal more, but I wish to take a moderate view—at least £2,500,000 of wages. In other words, 32,000 working men have gained wages equivalent, on an average, to 30s. per week continuously throughout the year in consequence of the preference given by Canada. Thirty-two thousand men with their families means 160,000 individuals. The improvement in their position affects members of other trades. The shopkeeper benefits if the working man has more to spend. The man who supplies him with clothes, or with food, or anything else—all are benefited when the working man gets employment; and unless my friend in the corner is a foreign millionaire living in this country on his income, I really do not see how he could escape being benefited by such a change as that.

That is what has been done for you. That is an example of one single act of preference on the part of one single colony. Is it not reasonable to consider whether more might not be done in the same way? When the Canadians come to us, as they do, and say, 'We have given you this for nothing, now give us something, and we will give you more,' how are they met? How are you asked to meet them? You are asked to meet them with a flat and an insulting refusal. We have heard a good deal about the loyalty of the colonies. There has never been any question about the loyalty of the colonies; but there is some question, it seems to me, about the loyalty of the motherland. When these children of ours come to us and say, 'Discuss the terms of a treaty for our mutual advantage,' and when we reply to them, 'No, what we would do for any other nation if it came to us we will not do for you; we will meet you by all means, but we will under no circumstances discuss with you the only thing you care to discuss'—when we treat them in that way, then I venture to say that these are high-spirited nations, and the time may come when, if we treat them in such a spirit, they may seek elsewhere for the sympathy they ask.

What do you think is likely to be the effect of this kind

of argument upon our loyal fellow-subjects? What would it be here? Put yourselves in their places. The other day there came to me a copy of a newspaper—an important Ottawa paper—which put the thing, as it seemed to me, in a nutshell. I will read what that paper said: ‘Canada, unless her hand be clasped anew in that of Great Britain, will proceed more and more to play a lone hand herself, and while the kindest sentiments and affection will remain, the country, nevertheless, in her rapid growth, will become inevitably more self-centred. In a business and political way she would continue framing business and political arrangements to suit herself, each of which would render less probable and less possible any exceptional alliance with Great Britain, and would render much more uncertain than even at present what Great Britain can look to from Canada whenever any time of Imperial stress may come.’ The extract goes on to say: ‘Sneers in England about buying colonial loyalty are utter rot. One might as well talk about a father trying to buy his sons’ loyalty because he proposes to them to enter his business house, with a share in the profits. There is no buying or selling in this matter.’

That is the right way to look at the matter. We want, and they want, to bring the Empire into a partnership, and, if you can secure a partnership in trade, believe me that will develop into a partnership in other things. We are asked to negotiate with such an object. But you are asked, why go into a negotiation when it is impossible to come to an arrangement? Why is it impossible? I was sorry to see that Sir Edward Grey, who is a sober and moderate politician, took the same line as Mr. Asquith. They say, you cannot make a bargain with the colonies, because they will not give you Free Trade. Well, you can make a bargain with France; you would be only too glad to do it. Mr. Cobden was glad enough to do it, and yet France did not give you Free Trade. Because you cannot get all that you would desire, why should you not take what you can get?

I quite agree that at the present moment you cannot get Free Trade from the colonies. Rightly or wrongly, they believe in a certain amount of Protection. They are not going to hand over their growing industries entirely to competition, even from the mother country. Very well, you cannot get that. But are you like a child that has set his heart on the moon? Will you not be satisfied with, say, a bun instead? You can get the bun. What will they give you if they will not give you Free Trade? They will give you, in the first place, a share in their home industry. There are many things which they do not make, and are not likely to make, or fitted to make. They will gladly buy these things from our manufacturers at home. They will keep a part of their own trade, but there will be a large margin under any circumstances which we can have if we like; but you can have much more. These colonies are doing a large trade with foreigners. It is a large and growing trade. A certain portion of it will never be taken from the foreigner, because the foreigner is the only producer. We cannot produce French claret, or coffee, or tea; and, accordingly, there is a large number of articles which they will always buy from the foreigner. But when all that is accounted for, there remains at the present moment a trade which they are now doing with the foreigners, of £30,000,000 a year, and which they might do with us, because they are all articles which we make as well as the foreigners.

Please consider what is happening now under the present system. Under our present system the foreign trade with the colonies is rapidly increasing. It is increasing much more rapidly than our trade is. I had an Australian paper sent to me the other day. In ten years, it says, the foreign exports to the colonies increased five times as much as the British. Germany and the United States increased four and a quarter millions in the last three years in their sales to Australia alone. You have increased somewhat, but the increase of the foreigner is greater than your increase. He is gaining upon you. Can you not see what will happen if

that goes on? 'You will lose your market. You will lose your opportunity. You will never have it again. Now you have an opportunity, not only of retaining the trade you have, but of securing a reversion of a great portion of this trade which is now slipping into foreign hands, to English manufacturers and to English working men.

All that is subject of discussion at the conference which we want to see established; and our opponents, treating this as a party question, say, 'No, we won't have a conference; or, at all events, we won't discuss this subject.' I do not believe that in the history of any country there ever was a piece of greater pedantry and greater folly.

I come to another point. What our opponents say is not only that the colonies will not give you enough, but that they will ask too much. Those statesmen who apparently are ready to congratulate you upon the increase of the wealth of the country, which they attribute to Free Trade, pass over without the slightest observation the fact that thirteen millions of the population are on the verge of hunger and are under-fed: these people, while they tell you that the exports are increasing, yet have nothing to say about the fact that a largely decreased proportion of the population is being employed in industrial pursuits, compared with what were employed some twenty years ago. They have nothing to say about the enormous emigration which goes away from this country, and which would not go if people were satisfied at home. They have nothing to say about the increase in pauperism and the increase in crime.

But there is one thing they do say. They say it loudly on every occasion. They say it with every kind of exaggeration, and they produce a great effect. They say, 'Your food will cost you more.' If only they would confine themselves to saying that in public meetings like this, we could meet their inaccuracies—that is a long word. If we could meet their inaccuracies we should not be afraid of them; but they go into the house of the artisan and into the cottage of the labourer, and they talk to them, and,

above all, they talk to their wives, and make assertions they ought to be ashamed to make. As I have said, they are producing a great effect, but it will not last. No party in the long run benefits by these colossal misrepresentations,

But it may be worth while once more to deal a little in detail with these questions. I assert that it is absolutely untrue, under any policy which I, at least, have proposed, that your food will cost you more.

I want to bring you all the trade the colonies can bring you. I want to bring about a closer intercourse between the colonies and ourselves, in order that our great Empire may be maintained. What do the colonies ask from you in return for this? They ask that a certain advantage should be given to them upon some of their principal products. They don't ask it upon all, but they do ask that that advantage should be given them upon corn, meat, dairy produce, and upon fruit.

That is what they ask. And, in order to give it to them, we should have to put a small tax upon these articles. They do not want a big tax. All they ask is for the turn of the scale. In trade, as no one knows better than the great industrial and manufacturing concerns, the majority of which are entirely in favour of this policy, 'the turn of the scale' is a consideration. In our modern trade, transactions are so large that a farthing will make the difference where in the time of our ancestors they would have required larger consideration. The colonists believe, and I believe, that if they could get a trifling advantage they would divert the whole of our demand for these foodstuffs into their market, and out of the foreign market; and they believe that that would not involve any increase of prices at home. It would involve an increase of cost to the foreigner, but not an increase of prices paid to the colonial.

Now, remember that the colonial does a great deal for you; the foreigner does nothing. The deliberate purpose of the foreigner is to shut you out of his markets. If he does not do it, it is because trade is so complicated that he is not able to do it, but there is no want of goodwill and attention on

his part. He puts on a duty to shut out your machinery. He fails, either because your machinery is so much cheaper to begin with, or because your manufacturers can afford to reduce their profits, or your working men are prepared to reduce their wages. And still you send your machinery abroad. How long will that last? When the foreigner finds that he has not succeeded, he raises the duty, and he goes on raising it until he has accomplished his desire. And that has been the history of every trade in this country in which the continental commerce has been of importance. One after another the profitable branches of your trade have been attacked; one after another they have been forcibly excluded from foreign markets. And that will go on. You have on one side the foreigner who, quite within his right, for a very obvious purpose tries to destroy your trade. On the other hand, you have the colonial, who tries to increase your trade. Which will you favour?

Let me try and make this clear. Suppose there are an ironmonger in Gainsborough and two bakers; and one of the bakers buys everything in the way of ironmongery that he wants at home and in his business from the ironmonger; and the other baker thinks he can do a little better in the stores in London, and he buys all his ironmongery from the stores in London. What do you suppose the ironmonger will do? It seems to me he will be certain to buy the greater part of his bread, if not the whole, from the baker who buys from him, even if he has to pay a little more. Well, that is your position. I say, 'Buy from your colonies, who will buy from you, even if it costs you a little more.'

Then I go back, and I say it will not cost you any more. There is nothing more certain than this in that most uncertain of sciences which is called political economy, that a tax imposed upon an article which is not a monopoly, in which there is competition, does not fall wholly upon the consumers. It falls in part, at any rate, upon the foreigner, or upon the producer.

I will give you one illustration of that. The matter is too large to be discussed in detail. There is the United States

of America. It is one of the most Protectionist countries in the world—much too Protectionist in my opinion. Its tariff is not a scientific tariff. It goes to an extreme that I should never propose to follow. But in those circumstances, if our opponents were right, everything in America would be much higher in price than it is here. They put on a duty of 25 per cent. upon this, a duty of 50 per cent. upon that, and of 60, 70, and even 100 per cent. Now, are things dearer on the whole in America than here? Some things are. Luxuries are much dearer. If you want to buy a lot of silver plate you will have to pay more for it in New York than you will in London. If you want the best clothes probably it is the same thing. But Mr. Carnegie, whom I take, not as a supporter of my own, but as a man with a great experience, said last year in an article which he wrote, that the ordinary necessities of life of the working man were cheaper in America than they were here, that for a pound sterling you could buy more clothes and more food in America than you could buy in England.

I only quote that for the purpose of showing that, in spite of the taxes in America, you have actually, cheaper necessities than you have in this country. It is clear, therefore, that it is not merely a question of a tax, and that the tax does not necessarily increase the price of food. I do not believe it increases it at all. I could, if I had time, take Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, which are Protectionist countries, and I could show you that in no single case has the price of food gone up in proportion to any tax placed upon food. I conclude from that that if I put a small tax on food, or any kind of food, the consumer will, perhaps, pay none of it, will certainly not pay the whole of it, and at the worst will only pay part of it.

When, however, my opponents charge me with taxing food, they either misunderstand me or they misrepresent me. I am not going to tax food: that is to say, I am not going to tax food in the whole. I tax one kind of food in order that I may be able to untax another kind of food. Let me put a homely illustration to you. Suppose you go

into a coffee-house and ask for tea and bread and butter, and when you have finished you are told that the cost of the tea is a penny and that the bread and butter is given in for nothing. Very well. Then the next day, let us suppose, you go to another tea shop, and again you ask for bread and butter and tea, and when you come to pay your bill you find tea charged a halfpenny and bread and butter a halfpenny. Does it make any difference to you? You pay a penny in either case. That is precisely what you will do under my system—unless you do better.

I have still something more to say. I began by saying I am not going to put you in a worse condition. I now say I am going to put you in a better position. How can I do that? By taxing things where the tax is partly paid by the foreigner, instead of taxing things where the whole tax is paid by you. If all the taxes that I have spoken of were put on to-morrow, the difference to a working man in paying these taxes would be something like fourpence or fivepence per week; that is to say, if I stopped there. If I only put on taxes the taxes would be fourpence or fivepence per week in the ordinary life of a working man or an agricultural labourer, supposing he paid the whole of them. But he won't pay the whole of them. I have already said that in every other country in the world where these taxes are put on the consumers only pay half, or less than half, of them. Therefore he will pay, it may be, twopence or twopence-halfpenny. But then I am going to take off taxes to the extent of at least as much, and probably more.

A man wants his bread; yes, but he wants his tea, too, and from one thing or another—I do not pledge myself to details now, although I have proposed a plan—from one thing or another which is necessary to the working man I am going to take off more than I put on. And while under our present system he has to pay every farthing of the tax upon tea, or coffee, or sugar, I am going to put the tax on the things in which there is competition, and in which the principal part of the tax will come out of the pocket of the foreigner. He will be made to contribute towards our ex-

penditure. He will be made to pay a reasonable toll in order to gain entry to the biggest market on the face of the globe.

The result of my policy will be this—that the poor will pay less than they do now upon the absolute necessities of life ; that the rich, or those who approach even the class of rich people, will have to pay a little more for their luxuries ; and that the foreigner will have to pay a good deal more for what I have called the privilege of entering this market. I hope I have said enough to show you that under this alteration there is no fear whatever for any man's home that he will have to suffer the starvation with which he is threatened, or that his big loaf will not be as big as ever. The whole object of my policy is not to lessen your loaf ; it is to give you more money to buy it with.

The whole question of the social condition of the poor is contained in this one word—employment. In the past this cotntry was in an exceptional position. It was the workshop of the world. We were fortunate in agriculture, we were supreme in manufactures. That is no longer the case. We are richer than ever, but in totally different circumstances. Our competitors are gaining upon us in that which makes national greatness. We may be richer, and yet weaker. We may have more millionaires and fewer working men, and that is the direction in which we are tending. Now, while our competitors are excluding us from their markets, they are gaining greatly upon ours. We see the beginning, because it is only the beginning. Are you so foolish that you are going to wait until it is too late to find a remedy ? Those are the wise nations that look a little ahead and see a difficulty before it overwhelms them, prepare against fire before it breaks out, and amongst those nations may we not hope our own will be counted ?

If you do not attend to these indications, if you are led astray, if you allow your party feelings to cause you to close your ears against the warnings which are given you in no party sense, then I say you will awake some day to find the source of your strength undermined, because you have mistaken a musty dogma of old-fashioned schools for the

principle of your progress and of your national life. You have it in your power to avoid these evils. You have it still in your power, by your decision, to maintain the position of your country in the world. You may secure it if you will meet your children everywhere with open arms ; if, at the same time, you will sharpen your weapons against those who are inclined to treat you badly ; if you will hold your own against those who turn their back to you ; if you will welcome those who are only anxious to co-operate with you in a greater future than any past that we have known. And then indeed you may hope to transmit to your descendants untarnished in lustre, undiminished in power, the sceptre of our Imperial dominion.

TRADE UNIONISM AND TARIFF REFORM .

LONDON, MAY 17, 1905

[From an address delivered before the Organised Labour Branch of the Tariff Reform League.]

. . . IN the speeches of our opponents you will find that their main case from beginning to end consists in two propositions. One is that this country is so wealthy, so prosperous, and, above all, that the condition of the working classes is so eminently satisfactory, that it is a piece of gross impertinence on my part to attempt to improve it. The other is that either through ignorance, as some of them kindly admit may be possible, or, as is generally suggested, through a double dose of original sin, my proposals are made with a view of raising the cost of living to the working man.

I hope you will not think me egotistic if I say one or two words on this personal question ; because, after all, a great deal depends in this country on what you think of the man who is addressing you. If you think him dishonest, if you think him selfish and acting for himself alone, you will treat, and properly treat, his arguments with scant ceremony ; but if you believe that he is thoroughly honest,

then, at all events, you will try to understand what it is that he has to put before you, and you will treat his arguments as favourably as you can.

I assert that, having been in public life for more than thirty years, I can point to a continuous endeavour throughout that long time to make the improvement of the condition of the mass of the working people one of my two chief objects. And when I speak of the working classes I do not mean that I am taking up their case in any invidious sense; because I believe that the interest of one class is the interest of the nation, for you cannot benefit one class without benefiting all others. But it has always seemed to me that the first duty of the statesman is to improve the condition of that vast majority of the people who depend for their subsistence and for the subsistence of their wives and families upon their daily labour.

The second object I have had in view has been to maintain the greatness of the Empire; and although that is not a subject upon which I am going to speak to-day, remember it is intimately connected with the whole question of Tariff Reform. If we carry this reform we shall not only, in my opinion, largely improve the condition of the working classes, and so increase the happiness of the whole country, but we shall also do more than any party has ever done before to secure the unity and continued prosperity of the Empire at large.

Then I will make one other personal remark. Let my opponents say what they can, I do not believe there is a single one of their hearers, not utterly ignorant nor utterly perverse, who will pretend that in this movement I have any personal interest whatever to serve. I am not in business, and cannot therefore do what it is alleged some people will do—make their fortunes by increasing the cost of the goods they sell. I am—what am I? A consumer. And, being a consumer, if the result of my proposals would be to increase the cost of living to the consumer, I shall suffer with the rest of them. I have not gained politically by giving up my position, and taking a subordinate, but I

hope a not less important part in politics. Therefore, under these circumstances, I plead for that considerate attention which hitherto I have always received at the hands of the working people.

I ask that because, unless I have the support of the working people, clearly my movement is already condemned, and utterly a failure. The working people, at the time when Free Trade was introduced, had no power at all. They were a mere fraction of the electorate. Now they are the vast majority; now they have the control of the elections in almost every constituency. . . .

The issues now are very simple indeed. Think what they are. In the first place, there is the great principle that you should treat your friends better than your enemies or your competitors. I think every working man feels that, and working men are more unselfish, I have found, than some other classes that make more pretence. Do we not all feel it in our own lives? If a man is kind to us, do we not feel that we are ungrateful and worse if we are not kind to him? If he has been good to us in our adversity, are we not bound, if trouble comes to him, to do our best to assist him? What is the difference between individuals and States? Why are you to treat a great colony—you, the great British nation at home—on a different principle from that on which you would treat your own son or your own relation? Do not we owe something to our great colonies? They consider, and rightly consider, their own interests first; but their preference is always for us. When they found us in trouble the other day, and when every other nation on the face of the earth was more or less hostile to us, when we had not a single sympathiser on the Continent of Europe, there was no colony that was not warmly with us, offering to us every help which they had it in their power to render. Unless I am entirely mistaken, unless I am flattering myself when I say that I know the working man and something of his general views, they will never forget the relations established at that time of stress; and they would prefer—they will not ruin themselves for such a

sentiment—but they would prefer, if it could be shown that they will not lose seriously in the process, to do good to those who helped them in their time of necessity more than to any other people whatsoever.

What is the second principle which recommends itself to working men everywhere? Fair play—even if it is to their own disadvantage. If you can persuade them that something they want very much indeed would nevertheless be injurious and unjust to some other class of the community, you will find very few working men who will not give up their own interest in the matter. But surely the same thing applies again to nations. Have we fair play? Is it fair play that almost all other nations should be doing their utmost to exclude us from their markets and to take our trade, and that we should still be welcoming them to our hospitable shores? I quite agree with the gentleman who just now said that we are a great deal too hospitable. After all, our first duty is at home. When we have provided for our own starving family, then would be the time to provide work for other nations. But what is the interest of working men? I am not speaking of the wastrel, of the thriftless, or the drunken. For them I have no sympathy, except, indeed, that I would do all I could to bring them to a better way of thinking. But I am speaking of the great mass of honest, decent working men. What does that man want? He wants full opportunity of selling his labour. He does not want to live upon others; he does not want to confiscate other people's property. I have never found him envious; he does not wish to depend on charity; but, when he is willing and able to work, then he does find it very hard not to have the possibility of maintaining his family. More employment—that is what he wants.

The question of employment, believe me, has now become the most important question of our time. It never was so important before. It underlies everything; it underlies the position of the working man as a class; it underlies all trade unionism. That is one reason why I am so glad to come here and to see for myself how the proposals and the

principles I have laid down appear to you to affect your trade union principles. To me it seems that all these influences which affect the ordinary working man ought specially to weigh with the trade unionist; and if with the trade unionists at large, still more with their leaders, who, if they do their duty, ought to help to guide those who appoint them to the chief places in the organisation. What does the trade unionist want? What is his special reason for existence? Why do you organise and combine? You do it in order to secure fair conditions for your labour, in order to secure full employment, and in order to maintain the standard of life common among your class. I would go further and say not only to maintain it, but also to raise it.

Very well. My proposals have exactly the same object. If you, after considering them, think they will not have that effect, do not vote for them; but at all events my intention and my belief are that, acting indeed on a larger scale, and perhaps on even broader principles, the objects I expect to attain are the same objects for which you have been striving ever since trade unionism was formed. But if that is true, there is something which follows. The objects of trade unionism, like my objects, are altogether inconsistent with what our opponents call Free Trade, and what I call Cobdenism and free imports. You cannot make them consistent. It is perfectly ridiculous for gentlemen, leaders of trade unionism, and those who profess to be leaders of labour, to get up in the House of Commons and profess to be Free Traders when their whole system, from beginning to end, the whole object of the legislation which they support, the regulations which they make at home, are all entirely inconsistent with Free Trade. And, believe me, you cannot always go on in this illogical way in which your leaders have been going on. You must take a line. Be Free Traders if you like; but you cannot be Free Traders in goods and not be Free Traders in labour.

I will go a little more into detail. Your first object is higher wages and a better standard of living. How do you

secure that ? By combination. One working man standing against one rich employer is helpless. He is entirely at his mercy. A thousand working men bound together in a great confederacy may hold their own on equal terms, even with the richest employer. You combine, therefore, in order to bargain on equal terms, and have fair play in the result ; but you conceive, as I think rightly and wisely, that money is not everything, that conditions of life are also of the utmost importance, and that if the working men of this country are to maintain their position, and to be, as they are, respected, intelligent, influential, they must do everything to prevent a reduction of the standard of living which they are trying to maintain.

You endeavour to secure that by your own efforts—by strikes and combinations. You also call in legislation to your aid. All the legislation which has been supported on your behalf has had the same object. For instance, there is the fair wages resolution, which requires that goods made for the Government or for municipal bodies shall be produced under conditions which are the ordinary conditions of the trade in which they are produced. You have prohibited the importation of prison goods, you have legislated against sweating, and you are going to legislate against aliens. I am very glad to find, from the speeches to which I have just listened, that this meeting understands on what grounds you seek that alien legislation. To my mind it is unjust and unfair to indulge an unfeeling criticism of these poor people. I sympathise with the aliens, as I am sure you do. They are often very miserable, no doubt, in the countries from which they come. They are very ignorant, and are subject to all kinds of disadvantages, and we are very sorry for them. But we do not mean that these unfortunates shall come in here in order to multiply the number of unfortunates who are already here. It is chiefly an economic question. If we had plenty of spare land on which we could put these people where they could subsist without coming into contact or competition with our labourers, do you suppose that any of us would object ? On the contrary, we should welcome

them. As it is, they come in bringing nothing ; no trade, no invention—only a standard of life to which we are not accustomed, and which, if we accepted it, would be a degradation and an injury to the whole country.

Now every one of these Acts of legislation—alien legislation, sweating legislation, fair wages legislation—is absolutely contrary to Free Trade. You cannot defend them on the principles of Free Trade ; they are in opposition to the principles of Free Trade. Do you wonder that the great author of Free Trade was opposed to trade unionism ? He was perfectly logical and consistent. Mr. Cobden said that he would as soon live under the Dey of Algiers as under a system of trade unionism. I do not blame him. The whole thing hangs together. What I do wonder at is that the intelligent men who profess to lead trade unionism should not be able to see that the two things hang together. If they play into the hands of the Cobden Club with their manifestoes against Tariff Reform, they will be really undermining the strength and importance of their own trade unionism.

I ask you to say that the principle of trade unionism is the more generous principle, and, in the long run, better for the nation as a whole. It is a less selfish principle. Cheapness is not the main object of life. There are many other things which are much more important. If not, what is the meaning of all this outcry about sweating ? Mr. Keir Hardie, for instance, made some strong observations about foreign sweaters in connection, I think, with the Aliens Bill. All the leaders of the working classes in the House of Commons have plainly shown that they think there are two enemies of the human race. One is the sweater, who pays lower wages than he ought to pay, and the other is the blackleg, who receives lower wages than he ought to receive. But if the Free Traders are right, you are shooting at the wrong people—you are flogging the wrong horse. The sweater and blackleg are really the benefactors of their species, because all they do contributes to make things cheaper. Until the trade unionists recognise very clearly that, whether they are

right or wrong, their object and their principles are totally different from those of the Free Traders, I think they will have themselves to blame if, in spite of all their combination and all their wealth, and all their numbers, they will never be able to carry out the objects they have in view.

I said that you had a second object, which is purely a humane object, and has nothing to do with wages—that is, that proper precautions should be taken to protect you in your labour against avoidable dangers. For that you have the Mines Act, the Truck Act—which protects the men from injustice, if not from danger—and lately the Compensation to Workmen Act. And let me say, in passing, that there is not one of these measures which I have not been instrumental in supporting. I think, without arrogance, I can claim that the Compensation to Workmen's Bill and the last Mines Explosives Bill would not have been passed but for my support and instigation. Remember, all those Acts increase cost to the consumer ultimately. In the first place, they increase it to the manufacturer. If the manufacturer is making enormous profits, if he has a monopoly or some special advantage, he can, perhaps, afford to pay for these things out of his own pocket; but you know that in the general state of industry in this country that is not the position. Most men who employ their money in trade get on the average but a very moderate return for it. This expense comes first out of their pocket, and, if it remains with them, they must give up their business. How does the trade unionist gain by compensation for accidents if he has no work? He will not have any accidents, it is true, but neither will he have any food. Therefore, your object is not secured.

Then you must proceed a step further. You must enable the manufacturer to get back part, at all events, of those charges in the price he obtains for his goods. How can he do that now? The moment he puts on an extra price he is met by foreign competition, and by unfair foreign competition. That is the point which I am afraid a great many people are quite unable to understand. In our modern

business it is not sufficiently observed that success depends on the quantity of goods you produce. If a man produces a thousand articles, he can sell those articles much cheaper and make a larger profit on them than if he only produced fifty. But the Englishman is at a disadvantage in that respect. The Englishman can never hope to do more than sell in his own market, and in certain Free Trade markets outside, such as the colonies. For although they have heavy duties, the majority of those colonies buy from us. And there is India, too. But in what sense has he got his own country, India, and the colonies? Free competition with foreign countries. They can come in on exactly the same terms as the home manufacturer. The result is that, while we have only a part of a market of 40,000,000 at home, they have the whole of their own markets, protected by tariffs, and the whole of ours as well on free and equal terms. Have you thought of that and of what is happening? Because all that I am telling you is growing, owing to certain things which it would take me too long to go into. It did not exist thirty years ago. It began then; but the worst has happened in the last ten years, and the next ten years will be much worse than the last.

What has happened? When a man wants to start a new industry, what does he do? Does he start it in this country? Many do, because they do not want to take their works and families away from home, or for reasons of sentiment. But a great number, especially those with large capital, send their works abroad, and wherever they send them they get a double market. If they send them to Germany, they have 50,000,000 of Germans as their customers on the same terms as the German manufacturers, and they can send to England just as cheaply as if they had been in England. If they go to America, or if they go to France, the same principle prevails.

You are told that these proposals of mine will bring you to starvation. Nobody has ever been able to show that. Nobody has ever been able to show me how a farthing a loaf extra, with 4d. or 6d. off tea, 3d. off sugar, and something off

tobacco and other articles of necessity, could possibly starve the people of this country.

But we have a better argument than that. If it would starve us to adopt a moderate duty, the nations which have adopted a high duty must have starved long ago.

On the contrary, during the time they have put on these duties their condition has enormously improved. There is not one of those countries that can show what we can show—a continual increase in want of employment. There is not one of those countries whose statesmen could declare, that 13,000,000 of their countrymen were on the verge of hunger. The unemployed return of the trade unions in this country is nearly 6 per cent. ; in Germany it is about 2 per cent. There is something more important than that. When the working classes are dissatisfied with the conditions under which they live, the intelligent ones emigrate and go to other countries. What has happened in the course of the last few years ? The emigration from this country continues enormous, while the emigration from Germany has very much decreased during the last twenty years. At this moment the emigration from Germany is something like 6 per 10,000 of the inhabitants per annum. In this country it is $34\frac{3}{4}$, or nearly six times as large.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that restriction of unfair competition at home is useless without restriction on the products of foreign labour. What is the use, for instance, of legislating against sweating ? You will not allow sweating, you are trying to prevent it, not very successfully, in this country. You will not have sweated goods made in this country ; but you cannot prevent them from being made in Germany, Poland, or Russia. If they come to this country free, how is the English workman better off ? You might throw all your legislation into the fire for the good it does so long as you will not go further. You are in favour of excluding aliens who are undesirable from an economic point of view ; but where are the aliens going ? They must go somewhere. Let us say they stop in Germany. They will make their goods there, and their goods will come here.

You will therefore have their goods, and the economic result will be much the same in either case. You may get rid of certain diseases to which it is said you are liable as a result of this immigration, but you will not be better off in your pockets. Therefore I say you must in all these cases treat the two subjects of tariff reform and protection of labour as being on the same level.

My policy I will give you in one word. The domestic side of it is more employment for the people, and from that everything follows. It is more than all the legislation in which I have had any part. It is a greater thing than all the charities in the world. If we could get more employment for our people, then the standard of living, the rate of wages, the general comfort—all these things would easily settle themselves. How do I propose to secure it? I propose to get more employment for you in two ways. In the first place by endeavouring to arrange with foreign countries to give us the same treatment that we give them, or some approach to it. If they do that, our foreign trade will immensely increase. It has now remained stationary for thirty years; and if you take the kind of trade we most want, the manufactured trade, it has very much decreased in that period. Suppose they will not. Suppose they say, 'No; for thirty years you have given us everything, we think it perfectly monstrous that you should ask for anything in return.' Well, then, although I have been much criticised for using the words, I say it is my policy to refuse to take that answer lying down. And if we treat them as they treat us, in the first place we should keep, at all events, the greater part of our home trade. I doubt whether we shall have much less of theirs, because, bear in mind, that what they take from us now is the very *minimum* they can take. They take coal because that has been made for us by nature and they cannot imitate it by any artificial process. But, if coal were a manufacture, you would soon see such a duty put upon that that not a ton would go from this country. I believe we should not reduce what they take from us, but we should keep what

we can make for ourselves and we should reverse the process I have spoken about. Instead of our factories going over there to find profits for people in England and to find work for the people in Germany and America, their factories would come over here, and find more work for the British workman.

It is actually a fact which can be proved that foreign manufacturers have already taken options for land in this country on which they propose to build factories if my policy is carried. I was down at Manchester the other day. There is a great estate there under one trust or corporation, and I was told that the manager of the corporation had about a dozen offers of that kind. I have heard the same thing in other parts of the country. I have been told the same thing by foreigners themselves when I have been in foreign countries. I have been told the same thing by Englishmen who are at this moment waiting to decide. 'If your policy is adopted, of course we should prefer England, and give work here to thousands of men or more; but if your policy is not carried, we must go abroad in order to hold our own.'

That is the first way in which I propose to get more work for you. The second way is by encouraging the trade which is the best. The best trade is our friends' trade. We turn emigration to their shores, and we are increasing their demands. Do remember, all these things cannot be played with. You can have it now. Who can tell you whether you can have it five years hence? At this present moment the proportionate increase of foreign export to our colonies—to Australia, to Canada, to the South African colonies—is much greater than ours. The foreigners are dumping there as well as here. They are making the greatest efforts. They are subsidising steamships, they are taking all sorts of methods which are unfair to us in order to increase their trade with our kinsmen, and they are succeeding. If we do not succeed in these negotiations for a preferential arrangement with our colonies, I am perfectly certain that the foreigners will have a very much larger proportion of

their trade than I should like them to have. But with preference and the power of retaliation, you will increase immensely the trade which you have to do in this country, and you will find employment for those who are now unemployed; and when you have, as one gentleman said in the course of this debate, two jobs for one man, believe me you will not want any strikes. The wages will undoubtedly rise without them.

I have finished. I have taken, I am afraid, too much of your time. This is a very big question, and though I will not dwell on any other part of it this afternoon, yet remember there is another part of it which appeals to me more strongly than anything else. I think it will appeal also to you; because people who think that they win with the working man by appealing only to his pocket make, in my opinion, a very great mistake. To appeal to his sense of justice, to his pride in the kingdom to which he belongs, and the Empire of which he is a member, is after all a safer way of gaining his favour, as I believe, than merely to treat the matter as a question of so many pence on one side and the other. The Empire—we all talk of it very freely, but we sometimes do not give sufficient time and attention to find out what it means. Ours is an Empire by itself—an anomalous Empire. It really is a collection of States which are not bound together by anything more than sentiment. Sentiment changes. You can never tell if you got into another war like the great war from which you emerged successfully the other day that the colonies would be moved in the same way to come to your assistance. Is it certain that if we have no closer understanding, no better arrangement than exists at present, some greater emergency might not find us or them in a position in which common support would be withheld and in which each of us would have to fight our own battles against superior foes? If we can hold together as a real Empire by a thorough understanding for mutual interest and mutual defence, there is no Empire in the world of which I can conceive of which we need have any fear. If we are selfishly to seek our own advantage

apart, I confess, then, I look forward with doubt and anxiety to the future of our Empire. I do not want to have any doubt or any anxiety on the matter. To me it is everything. I want to see the great traditions of this country carried forward, I want to see the civilisation of Britain the civilisation for centuries to come of a large part of the world's surface. I want that the whole shall be as one, and that we may confidently meet every kind of competition.

But if you are to do that, it must be not entirely on our lines. You must think of your kinsmen and their dominions, as well as of your own, and the lines they wish to go upon. There is no one of them who does not believe that the way to unite the Empire is to make some approach to a common tariff. We stand alone because of our prejudices—prejudices, which I think ought to have been destroyed long ago by the experience we have had. Are we to make those prejudices so far our guide that when our colonies come and say : 'Treat us a little better than you do others, and we will treat you a little better, and in that way we will make a bond of interest and sentiment, and so gradually from step to step we shall get to a higher union.' Are we to meet them with a blunt negative ? Are we to say : 'We are so much wiser and better than you ? It is an impertinence on your part to come with such suggestions. We will not listen to them ; you may come to a conference, and we shall be happy to talk to you, but if you put forward any such proposals as those we shall refuse to listen to them ?' I do not believe that that is the will of the working class of this country. I am sure it is not in the interests of this country, and my own last word to you is to help me to make the Empire one.

CANADA AND IMPERIAL UNION

BIRMINGHAM, JUNE 27, 1905

[On Tuesday, June 27, 1905, the Members of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association visited Birmingham and were given a civic welcome. After visiting some of the manufactories of the city, they were entertained at

luncheon by the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, the Right Hon. Jesse Collings, M.P., President of the Chamber, in the chair. The following passages are taken from a speech made by Mr. Chamberlain in proposing the toast of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association.]

To my mind this twentieth century has brought to us the greatest question that has ever been before men since civilisation was organised over the globe. We have behind us two centuries of brave endeavour which have given us an Empire. Now the question is whether we are able to maintain it. We use these words which have come down to us from the past. We speak of the British Empire—we speak of the British Colonies. Neither the one nor the other term adequately represents the modern situation. The British Empire is not an empire in the sense in which the term has been applied to any empire which has gone before. The British Colonies are no longer colonies in the sense in which that term was originally applied to them. What are we all? We are sister States in which the mother country by virtue of her age, by virtue of all that she has done in the past, may claim to be first, but only first among equals. Now the question is: How are we to bring together these States which have voluntarily accepted one Crown and one flag, and which in all else are absolutely independent one of the other?

When have you had before such a problem in the history of the world? When has there been such a case when the task is to weld together all these diverse interests and powers for the common good? And we know what diverse interests we have to deal with. We all have our local interests to consider. We have our local contests, we have our party politics—and, Heaven knows, some of us have a great deal too much of them. But it is not of party politics that we are here to speak to-day. You would never think of offering anything but a friendly opinion, and that not unless it were asked for, as to our fights—fights, as Milton said, between the kites and the crows—for power and local office. You would no more think of interfering with them than we should dare to intrude upon your party divisions.

But surely, ladies and gentlemen, here we are, from widely different territories, still under the British flag, still united by sentiments the depth of which no one can exaggerate, still with common interests which it is our business to defend.

Our common interests ! These are not party politics. It is upon these that we want to hear you speak. It is these things upon which your right of speech, your voice, is as strong and as powerful as ours. If such a union as I desire is ever to be effected, can it possibly be advanced without your goodwill and assistance ? Are you to be silent upon questions of this kind, which are as wide as the world, because some petty politicians here or there find that in some way or another they are mixed up with the security of the parish pump ? You are Canadians. That is one compartment of your work. In that we have none but the friendliest concern. We also have our provincial interests to attend to. But we are on common ground when we come together, not merely as Canadians, Englishmen, Scotsmen, but as the sons of the great British Empire which we all desire to strengthen and make permanent.

This is the greatest question that we have in common. What is to be the future of this vast territory, vaster than has ever yet in the history of the world come under one common dominion or prospered under one single flag ? What is to be the future of what we still call an Empire ? Can the States which compose it be consolidated in spite of their divergent interests ? Can we band together as kinsmen and brothers, shoulder to shoulder, for the greater objects of this great combination ?

And I would go further and say to you, gentlemen, members of great firms, practised men of business, knowing something of what is going on in all parts of the world, are you entirely satisfied with the relations which exist between us at the present time ? Are you certain that they provide for a peaceful future ? Here we are watching, as it were, the clash of great empires in all parts of the world. We see that those empires are organised for all contingencies and crises,

for which we ought to be prepared? Do not let it be supposed that I doubt, or have ever doubted, the loyalty of the whole of the British subjects throughout the Empire. I have seen a statement of that kind—part of the contemptible criticism of men who are unable to see the real merits of a great argument. But in no word that I have uttered, in no thought of my mind, has there been ever any doubt that Canada,—and not Canada alone, but Canada and Britons throughout the world, will show the most absolute fidelity to the engagements which they have undertaken.

I know what the sentiments are which unite us—sentiments based upon ties of blood and history, of community of language and of laws. I hope that you feel when you come here, as I have felt when I have been in Canada, that you are at home.

These ties are slender, but they are strong; and we of all men, we who live at home in Great Britain, would be ungrateful if we did not recollect that in time of stress it was you, the strong sons of the Empire, who came from across the seas and gave us material support where it was necessary, and what perhaps we valued more, that moral sympathy which encouraged us to do our best at a time when every stranger and foreign nation was more or less against us—more or less unscrupulous in the denunciations of our motives and our policy. With you, members of the family, we found some comfort, and with you we carried through successfully one more of the great undertakings which the obligations of Empire from time to time have imposed upon us. Least of all do I depreciate or under-estimate these ties of sentiment. But they are not enough. Is it not possible to believe that these ties of sentiment alone might prove insufficient in some great crisis of our fate? What we, the sons of Empire throughout the Empire, have to do is to devise some means of cementing this union, which would be worth nothing if sentiment did not exist, but which cannot be worth much if the sentiment is not organised and consolidated.

Will you consider what a future is open to all those of

us who have any imagination in regard to these larger questions? We have some reason, perhaps, to think well of ourselves—I am not speaking of this country, but of the countries under the British flag at the present moment. But will you carry your imagination forward into the future? Will you think what we may become in the course of the living century? Is there any one who dares to put any limit on the extension of power and population and all that goes to the making of a great nation which may come in the course of what comparatively is only a short period in the history of a nation, one or two generations of men? But what follows? This is the creative time. This is the time when we can take advantage of our present position in order to secure a greater position in the future. If we remain united—well, I have said that for you, the younger branches of the Empire, there is no limit to your progress; but even this grey old motherland, which has borne so long the burden of a great Empire and a great responsibility, even we are no contemptible ally. We have given you no reason to be ashamed of your relationship. We dare not face the possibility of separation. United we shall always be equal to the great task which Providence has imposed upon us; united no man shall make us afraid.

Well, how are we to reach this desirable position? Rome was not built in a day. An Empire cannot be established and built up in a few years. It may not be in a few generations of human time. But we who are now living have our present responsibility. Let us do nothing that will make it impossible that those who succeed us shall go further than ourselves. Let us not try to block the tide; let us keep it flowing. Let us press on, with all the energy we have remaining to us, that at least during our time we may have advanced one step in the direction of this great ideal which, if we can only seize it, will secure to the future of the world its civilisation and its peace. Our duty is to take every opportunity—this is one—for exchanging ideas in regard to an aspiration which I believe we all share. We have to think imperially. Without any lack of the patriotic in-

terest and affection that we feel to our own homes, let us remember always that there is something even greater than that—a higher patriotism, a more extensive affection, one which will have a greater influence in the future of the world.

Now we have an opportunity of doing something, and the opportunity has come from our colonies. It takes shape in the language of your Prime Minister, who said only the other day : ‘ We have made our offer to the mother country ; we have offered to make a treaty with her for our mutual advantage.’ And the principle upon which that treaty is to be based is a very simple one, a fundamental one. It is that we should treat our friends a little better, let us say, than our competitors.

I know there are difficulties. We all know there are difficulties. You have your difficulties. I recognise the limitations which your conditions impose upon your statesmen. I can see how impossible it would be for a great country with unlimited resources and opportunities and possibilities like Canada to mortgage its future to make a treaty which could not be permanent, a treaty which would hamper the progress of its natural industries, which would either injure them in the present, or prevent their development in the future. I recognise that that with you is a cardinal condition of a treaty. We also have our difficulties. I will not dwell upon them, because they seem to me to be so closely associated with those party politics to which I referred that perhaps any discussion of them would be out of place in this assembly. But then you know that we are not only an old country, and not only one of the most democratic countries on the face of the earth, but we are also a very conservative country. Our democracy is conservative. When a doctrine has been entertained, rightly or wrongly, for two generations, it becomes a superstition, and then it is sacred. We have our difficulties, and it is the business of every statesman to overcome them. I do not think that they are unsurmountable, if only we keep in view the greater objects which lie behind these commercial undertakings, and which exceed them altogether in importance.

I believe with your Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, that if men of business were to get together and discuss these matters they would find that in spite of all that is necessary to conciliate the prejudices on both sides, there is still ample scope for a treaty, which would bring us closer together, would benefit both, and strengthen those ties of sentiment to which I have already referred. The people who come together must be men of business. Yes, but they must be patriots also. Think what we have to deal with—the great Empire under the mild rule of the British Crown, which is something that the world has never seen or known before. Nothing like it can you read of in history, in territory so vast, in population so great, in diversity of product so extraordinary. You have an Empire ; your Empire—that is what I wish to impress upon you—your Empire as much as ours. You have this Empire ; and there is nothing that man can want, there is no necessity of our lives, nothing which adds to our comfort, no luxury which is desirable, which cannot be, if you will have it, produced within this Empire and interchanged within it. If you are willing, and other branches of the Imperial race, you may have a self-sustaining Empire. And think—although I have not time to develop it—think what a self-sustaining Empire would mean, and what an unique position, absolutely unparalleled, it would give to the British people in the future !

Ladies and gentlemen, it sounds a simple saying—let us take it as a motto. Let us buy of one another. If we buy of one another, commerce of that kind is twice blessed ; like the quality of mercy, it blesses him who gives and him who takes. You have to think that there is no corner of this great Imperial possession whose prosperity is not really a definite matter of interest to every other part of it. Let our trade be, if we can make it so, under the common flag. Let everything we do have its reaction as well as its action. Let it benefit us, each in our several divisions, but let it benefit at the same time our fellow-subjects, our fellow-kinsmen in other parts of the world. Let our interests be in common, let the movements of our population all tend to

the greatness of the Empire. What is sadder than to see some of our best blood leaving to build up the strength of our competitors? It is not that I am envious of our competitors; it is not that I have not a large heart which can take them in; but I would take in my friends first. I would like to send the children of the United Kingdom, if indeed they have no place at home which they can usefully and beneficially to themselves fulfil, I would like to send them to build up the industries, to till the uncultivated lands of those great states across the water, where they will find already reproduced all the best features of the old life at home.

If I venture before you, as before my own countrymen, to advocate such changes as may be necessary to bring about this mutual sense of responsibility, do not believe those critics who say I am advocating a sordid bond between you and us, or that I am governed by a purely selfish interest in my own country. Indeed, it is a larger object that I have in view. It is because I think that, if we do not hold together, if we gradually and unwillingly and almost imperceptibly fall apart, there is no longer for any one of us that great position in the history of the world which this country has hitherto occupied. It is not that we are weaker than our ancestors were, but that other forces have arisen into existence which our ancestors did not know. Our ancestors—and remember I speak now of your ancestors as well as ours—our ancestors one hundred years ago, with half the population, with one-tenth of the wealth that we possess, stood against a world in arms, and stood successfully. They gave us what we have. They gave it to us by virtue of the power of sacrifice that was in them. They thought of the future and of their descendants, not merely of their purely personal or temporary interests. The more I think of what was done in those days the more I see what giants those men were. And are we going to allow that history shall write of us that we who possessed the greatest heritage that ever was left to a nation or a race—that we whose ancestors obtained this position by virtue of their courage, their resolution, and their self-sacrifice—were so degenerate

that, while enjoying for ourselves all the 'privileges which they had given us, we allowed the sceptre of this great dominion to fall from our enfeebled hands ?

VOTE OF CENSURE ON LORD MILNER

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 21, 1906

[The occasion on which the following speech was delivered was that of a vote of censure in the House of Commons on the late High Commissioner for South Africa. Lord Milner's policy had made him noxious to a large section of the supporters of the Liberal Government, and the error of a subordinate, for which Lord Milner had generously but unnecessarily assumed entire responsibility, was made the pretext for a concerted demonstration against him. The leading members of the Government did not vote in the ensuing division, but abstained. Their number included men like Mr. Asquith and Mr., now Viscount, Haldane, who had openly approved Lord Milner's South African policy, and were accounted his personal friends.

It will be noticed that, in this speech alone of the speeches which make up these volumes, the interruptions and signs of approval or otherwise are retained from the original shorthand report. Those most familiar with Mr. Chamberlain's public speaking, whether in Parliament or on the platform, feel that his management of interruptions was a feature which should be illustrated. And the interruptions on this occasion and Mr. Chamberlain's handling of them were an element in the debate.]

MR. SPEAKER,—I can hardly think, sir, of any task more distasteful to a generous mind than that which has been voluntarily undertaken to-night by the two honourable gentlemen who have preceded me. Of course, I accept their own statements that they were animated by the highest and, I will add, a very exceptional sense of public duty. The honourable gentleman, the honourable member for North Salford, I think, will admit a reluctance in pursuing the duty which he thought had been cast upon him. He said he had no feeling of malignity towards Lord Milner, that he was only impressed by the necessity of vindicating his country's honour. Well, sir, let me say at once that I believe in the honourable gentleman's sincerity; but it is a very dangerous thing when private individuals, upon whom no great responsibility is cast, undertake so great a matter as

that of vindicating their country's honour. Sir, I accept the honourable gentleman's statement absolutely as to his own motives and intentions. I cannot do otherwise; for if, instead of being inspired by these high intentions he had been animated by party contentions, by what is worse still, by personal and petty spite—if that had been the cause, what could be meaner, what could be more contemptible in any member of this House, than to persecute a great servant of the public, a great official, who, in the words of Lord Elgin the other day—the generous words of Lord Elgin, is: 'One who, during a time of stress and anxiety, showed a courage and devotion to his country that his country will not forget.'

What, I say, could be more despicable than to attack such a man without the sanction of the highest motive, which the honourable gentleman claimed for himself, and to persecute him for a single error of judgment—a single error of judgment—in a long course of public service? 'No, no,' you say. Then for what do you persecute him? [An Honourable Member: 'Flogging.'] The motion is confined to a single act in a long public life, in a long course of public service. I am not permitted by the rules of the House to go beyond the resolution, and I am bound to say that the two honourable gentlemen who have spoken have confined themselves very strictly to this narrow ground; and for a single error of judgment, upon this single point, they ask the House to inflict this humiliation on a most distinguished member of our great Civil Service. What is the proposal? In the absence, the necessary absence, of the person accused—for you have not called him to the bar of this House—you propose to call on the House to pass a resolution which can have no practical effect, and to inflict censure and humiliation on this man, of whose existence and work in our history, at any rate, if not, indeed, in this conflict of petty passion, in history, at all events, the people of this country will be proud. You ask the House to pass this censure on a man who is no longer in office, and for an error which you admit you know

he has frankly acknowledged, and for which he has expressed regret. Where is the generosity? Where is the magnanimity for which we take credit when you can put aside all that you owe to this great and distinguished public servant in order to condemn him, and to inflict this unnecessary humiliation on him after he has acknowledged and regretted the error he has committed? The resolution is retrospective. It is vindictive. Sir, let us have no cant about this matter. We all know, the country knows, that the object of this motion is to inflict humiliation upon a person who is as honest and as sincere as any member of this House, but of whose policy honourable members opposite happen to disapprove; and for that and for party reasons they pick up a single point in a long history of self-sacrifice and devotion. They pick it up because they have an admission; I am almost disposed to say an unnecessary admission—at all events it is a chivalrous admission—of the person concerned. They dare not question his policy as a whole, and they pick up the one point, the one little point, a comparatively unimportant point in the whole history of this great man's life. They pick it up because they have his own admission, and they cannot be contradicted; and they, accepting his regret, are not satisfied without the additional humiliation which they think they can inflict by a vote of this House, but which will recoil upon the heads of those who have proposed it, and upon those who may be ungenerous enough to support it. Now, sir, what are the facts? (Hear, hear.) Yes; I do not wonder honourable members opposite wish to hear them after the statement that has been made. I know, for I have had a long acquaintance with the honourable gentleman the member for North Salford, and I do believe in my heart that he is thoroughly sincere, that he means to be accurate, that he would not knowingly impute to even his bitterest opponent anything which ought not to be imputed; but I never heard in my life a statement in which there was more perversion of the true state of the case than the statement we have just heard from the honourable gentleman. He put in

adjectives without apparently any understanding of their importance. He actually declared in this House, when it was not so full as it is at present, that Lord Milner had admitted that he had deliberately broken an engagement undertaken with a foreign nation, and that he had purposely withheld the knowledge of the facts from the Government.

MR. BYLES: I said I understood Lord Milner's own words in the House of Lords to mean that. That is my clear understanding of them. They are not adjectives, but that does not matter. (Shame!)

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Order! order! I was put out for saying 'Shame' once.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: I hate to hear this laughter, whether in my favour or against me. The honour of the public service of the country is at stake. I did not laugh at or interrupt the honourable gentleman. I most deeply regret the statement he was persuaded to make, and I am going to treat this question seriously in answer to the honourable gentleman. He understood that to be what Lord Milner meant. But, sir, he cannot understand English. I am not going to read the whole of the speech, although it is a short one, in which Lord Milner acknowledged his part in this matter with a frankness which every impartial, honourable man will admire, and never, never in the whole course of this controversy has he admitted, or is it possible to suppose, that he purposely deceived the Government which he was serving, that he deliberately did this, that, or the other. In that case, for Heaven's sake, why are not honourable members consistent?

MR. BYLES asked whether the right honourable gentleman meant that this was an accident, or was it deliberately sanctioned. That was what he wanted to know. He understood Lord Milner to say that he sanctioned the flogging. He made no objection to what Mr. Evans told him he had done. Therefore he took it that it was purposeful, intentional, and deliberate.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: To my mind, and I will give my reasons for it, certainly nothing was less purposeful

and deliberate; and again I say I cannot believe the honourable gentleman in his sober—(laughter)—his serious moments. I am sorry that there should be this disposition to seize upon any possible slip which, in my anxiety to do justice to the subject, I may make—I say I cannot believe the honourable gentleman in his serious moments can believe that Lord Milner, a great public servant, with whom he says he has been in personal communication, could have deliberately done so outrageous a thing as purposely to deceive his parliamentary chiefs, and deliberately to do a great wrong which he had subsequently regretted; and I say, if that were true, honourable members ought to be consistent. They ought to understand that a charge of that kind cannot be met by the mere censure of the House. It is the most serious thing in the world; and nothing short of an impeachment would justify a charge of that kind. Now let me, at any rate, proceed to give my own version of the facts, as I understand them. Let any one contradict them afterwards if he thinks I have misunderstood them. When the late Government undertook to sanction the introduction of Chinese labour into South Africa they were guided by what had been done in regard to the employment of foreign labour in other colonies, and they nominated an official as protector of the Chinese, and the duty of this protector was to see that the contract entered into was understood by the labourer, that it was completely carried out, that the coolie was treated with humanity, and that his health, comfort, and general welfare were properly looked after. This was the duty of the official, a duty well known and performed in Mauritius, in the Malay Settlements, in the West Indies, and now in the Transvaal. For this purpose the Government nominated—I am not sure if the appointment was made by the home Government—Mr. Evans, a gentleman who had a most honourable record of, I think, twenty years in the Malay States, who had a high reputation for ability, for integrity, for humanity, who knew the Chinese language, and had been in constant communication with Chinamen in the

Malay States. I doubt myself whether a better appointment could have been suggested. Now this is the authority for any statement of fact that can be presented to the House, and Mr. Evans himself stated to Mr. Lyttelton that on a definite occasion, in the course of a general conversation, in which, no doubt, many other subjects were dealt with, he had casually, as it were, told Lord Milner that he had found it necessary to give permission for a certain limited amount of corporal punishment to be inflicted in the mines, and he stated—I forget whether he gave the explanation to Lord Milner—he stated to Mr. Lyttelton that he had done that because in the case of certain offences against discipline he had found that the delay, in taking the case to the courts and so on, led to serious difficulty, and that a trivial matter easily became a serious riot. It was in his opinion necessary that greater discretion should be given to a manager in the case of really trivial offences. That is Mr. Evans's statement, and for the moment I am only repeating it. It is not his statement that Lord Milner carefully and deliberately considered the matter, and there is no record whatever of this taking place. If it took place at all it took place in this casual way in the course of a conversation on many subjects, and Mr. Evans says that Lord Milner took no objection. (Hear, hear. 'He ought to have done so.') Ah, yes, if we were perfect how many are the things we might have done or done better. Lord Milner says, and no doubt every one will believe his statement, that he has absolutely no recollection of this conversation, but he has no reason whatever to doubt Mr. Evans's integrity or his memory, and therefore he has taken on himself to accept his statement as accurate. I am therefore debarred from going in any particular behind the statement of Mr. Evans. Lord Milner says he has no doubt the conversation took place as Mr. Evans stated, and now he has only to say, 'I think I was wrong in not taking notice of this statement; I regret that I did not do so.' Here we are all agreed, that this original permission which Mr. Evans says he reported to Lord Milner was illegal. The honourable

member for Newbury has been kind enough to give me credit for sincerity in my objections to flogging, and therefore he will not be surprised that I say I deeply regret that any official in the colonial or public service should have given this illegal permission which was given by Mr. Evans. I go beyond, and, accepting Lord Milner's statement, say also it is very much to be regretted that he failed to notice it, for that is the only charge that is brought against him. Mr. Evans only says, 'He took no objection.' I very much regret he took no objection, and that in the conversation which passed he did not at once say, 'No; I cannot listen to anything of the kind.' But I also think, in common fairness to Lord Milner, that he was likely to be much less on his guard against a gentleman who was a protector of the Chinese, and who, let me say, had been earnest and energetic on all other occasions in protecting the Chinese, and was constantly representing their wrongs and grievances, and endeavouring to secure a redress of them. Readily, in common fairness, we must admit that Lord Milner would be less on his guard against an evil coming from the protector of the Chinese than he would have been against it coming from any one else. Very shortly after this, and after Lord Milner had left, abuses and outrages on the Chinese were reported to Sir Arthur Lawley; and promptly dealt with by him; he withdrew any permission given, and refused to allow any sort of illegal punishment. May I further remind the House that Mr. Lyttelton, in his position as Secretary of State for the Colonies, the moment the matter was brought to his knowledge, expressed in severe terms his disapproval and his profound regret that anything of the kind had taken place? Now we all regret, Lord Milner himself included, that this incident occurred; and could it not now be allowed to rest? Surely, after such an expression of opinion as appears in the Blue Books by his official superiors, was not that sufficient to vindicate the honour of the country which the honourable member for North Salford had taken under his special care? It seems to me we ought to be satisfied. When the motion

was put down on the paper by a private member naturally my great interest was to know the view the Government were going to take. Did they think the circumstances demanded the censure of a great public servant? I hoped that they would take a very broad view of the situation, and that we might find ourselves in absolute agreement. But an amendment has been put on the paper. At an earlier part of the day I think the Under-Secretary for the Colonies complained that I had not been able to give him notice of an amendment which I moved. We have not had much notice. I have much more reason to complain of the action of the Government.

MR. CHURCHILL : I did not complain of that.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN : I do not complain in the least. I say we have only had short notice of this amendment. Although the honourable member's resolution has been on the paper for a long time, it was only this morning that we learned the particular way in which the Government propose to deal with it. They have put down an amendment. Sir, it is a cowardly amendment. I would prefer infinitely the resolution of the honourable gentleman. At all events that presents a clear issue. I should vote against it with a light heart, but I should vote against it with some respect for the honourable gentleman who, with, I think, a mistaken impression of his duty, has put it down in clear terms. But the amendment! It is an amendment which insults Lord Milner, and at the same time accepts the substantial part of the resolution of the honourable gentleman opposite. They think to gain votes by distinctly pointing at Lord Milner, and at the same time withdrawing his name. That is party tactics : Liberal policy. 'Well, I must refrain. But there is something else. What is this 'conciliatory' amendment to do? It is proposed in the interests of 'peace and conciliation.' It is an amendment which a politician may accept, but which on its merits would be rejected by every honourable man. This amendment is entrusted to the honourable gentleman the Under-Secretary for the Colonies. What is the history—

I am speaking of recent events—of the connection of the honourable gentleman with this matter? The other day he was asked a question on this matter, and from that almost sacrosanct position which he now occupies he described this action of the High Commissioner's as a grave dereliction of public duty. Brave words! (Ministerial cheers.) You agree? (Cries of 'Entirely' and 'Yes.') Why, do not you see that these brave words have very weak conclusions? There is a man in the very highest position in the public service. He has been guilty in your minds and in the minds of the Government of a grave dereliction of duty, and you are going to be satisfied with an empty resolution which, if you succeed in passing it, will be treated with contempt by every one who has the honour to appreciate the services of Lord Milner. You cannot condemn him in terms of this kind without admittedly laying yourselves open to the charge that you do not believe what you say, for if you do believe it you would impeach him.

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): I will vote for it if you will move it.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: I see the honourable gentlemen below the gangway appreciate the force of my argument. They would impeach him. They have the right to do it. They would repeat the experiment in the case of Warren Hastings at Heaven knows what cost to the country. They would have a great State trial occupying many years. It would end in a verdict of complete acquittal, and probably a subsequent Parliament would pass a most effusive resolution of gratitude and respect to the person whom they had impeached. I appreciate all that; it is consistent. What I complain of is the policy of the Government. Once more it is what it has been over and over again this session, a policy of contemptible weakness. Those who take this extreme view dare not carry their policy to its logical conclusion. The honourable gentleman who said Lord Milner had been guilty of a grave dereliction of duty said another thing which astonished me, and is quite new in official procedure. He

said Lord Milner had made a party speech in another place, and that relieved him of any obligation whatever to defend him. Well, I do not think Lord Milner has lost much. But what a statement! The obligation by long and honourable tradition of great offices to defend any public servant who cannot defend himself, the obligation to defend any public servant against unjust or excessive censure is an obligation independent altogether of all party considerations. I deny altogether that the speech made by Lord Milner could, by an impartial person, be considered in any possible sense a party speech. It was a speech made without any attempt to put pressure on the Government. It accepted the plea of the Government that they must have time to form their conclusions, and it put before the Government what they should be glad to have known—the opinion of a man of great experience and great knowledge upon the subject on which they have to pronounce. To call that a party speech is a misuse of terms. But, even if it had been a party speech, I will say that the honourable gentleman cannot, without a great breach of tradition, absolve himself from that honourable necessity placed upon a political chief to say all that can be said in favour of those who serve the department with which he is concerned.

MR. CHURCHILL: It is not so.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: It matters very little to such a man—to a man who entertains that view of his own obligations and of Lord Milner's services. I think it is regrettable that, on the present occasion, the representation of the Government should be committed to his hands. I say it is the duty of the head of a department, whoever he may be, to defend the servants of the department.

MR. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): Not for reprehensible conduct.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: I say it is the duty of the head of the department to defend the servants of the Crown against unjust censure. I ask this question—Is it just to censure a public servant who has given eight years, the best years, probably, of his life, to the service of his country—is it just to condemn him because he has con-

fessed to an error of judgment on a single occasion? Anyway that is a new idea of official responsibility. Many years ago—I believe it was in the early fifties—there was a great Liberal public servant, a diplomatist of great distinction—Sir James Hudson, who was our Minister at Turin, and who made a statement which was held to be, I think by many Liberals, certainly by the Tory Government then in power, of the highest indiscretion, a great mistake of judgment. Attention was called to it in this House, and it fell to Mr. Disraeli, who was then leading the House, to express the opinion of the Government on the subject. He refused to condemn Sir James Hudson, and this is what he said: ‘Great services are not cancelled by one act, by one single error, however it may be regretted at the moment.’

And, therefore, although Sir James Hudson was a political opponent and was known to be a strong adherent of the Liberal cause, Mr. Disraeli in those old days—we are much superior now—had the generosity to defend his political opponent for the reason I have given. Is there not even more reason in the case of Lord Milner? Will the House allow me to try and bring before them the nature of the work which is imposed upon High Commissioners, Viceroy, and Governors of Crown Colonies throughout the Empire? These men are in a way autocrats, and that brings upon them all the disadvantages which autocrats have to suffer. They are responsible for everything, be it great or be it small, in the administration with which they are connected. They are answerable for the security of possessions for which they are made responsible. They are answerable for order, for legislation, for every detail of administration, for every act, be it great or small, of every member, be he important or otherwise, of the whole administration. For all these things these men are, technically, at any rate, responsible to their departments and to this House of Commons. They are not infallible. How can you expect to get infallible administrators under such circumstances? I do not believe they are to be found anywhere, but certainly you do not offer much temptation. I have never heard of any one in the

colonial service who in these trying positions, having to submit, as he has to do, to this sort of ignorant and irresponsible criticism on the part of people who have none of his responsibility, has become a gold magnate, who has made a fortune, who has even been able to provide for those whom he has left behind him, by devotion to the public service, by his interest in the great work he is conducting from the highest motives. These men, some of them never rising to a great position, others occupying positions of the greatest responsibility, have continued to serve the country, and now you are placing a slight on the whole service in the person of one of its most distinguished representatives—Lord Milner. It is admitted that before he occupied his position in South Africa, Lord Milner had done great service to the State—and that is to be considered—he had done great service to the party opposite. But I put that aside. His great services to the country are his services in South Africa. During a great part of that time he was in a sense responsible to me, and as my colleague and friend a greater man I have never known. I have never known a great man who did not make mistakes. This man has given his life, he has risked his health, he has lived under conditions which very few in this House would be willing to sustain. Eight hours a day! Why, eighteen hours a day of continuous brainwork very often fell to his lot. He has had to deal with the administration in the Cape Colony under great stress and anxiety, in the Transvaal under circumstances of still greater difficulty, and during the whole of that time he has shown an ability, courage, and firmness that ought to commend itself to men who appreciate bravery at a time when his life might have been so much easier if he had shown weakness. Honourable members opposite may not agree with him, but I appeal with confidence to them to admire the character which he showed in difficult circumstances. And if they disagree with him for that, they cannot condemn him. His policy was my policy as long as I was in the Office. It was Mr. Lyttelton's policy when he succeeded me. They ought not to blame him. We were satisfied with all that he

did and we take the responsibility for every action which we have not officially condemned. It is we who ought to be the subject of their censure if they think we are deserving of it. In a debate which took place a day or two ago, I was struck by a speech delivered by Lord Stanmore. He is, I believe, a strong Liberal, and a most distinguished official. He has occupied the highest offices in many of our Crown Colonies, and he has been Governor of some of the most important possessions of the Crown. Lord Stanmore upon this matter expressed sympathy with Lord Milner. He went further. He expressed his belief that he himself and every Governor had at some time or another on their own responsibility committed the same error of violating the strict letter of the law. Well, honourable members opposite will not stop it by absurd resolutions of this kind. They will only stop it when they can make human nature perfect. I do not go so far as Lord Stanmore. I occupied my position for eight years and I am not aware of any violations even of the spirit of the law. But there were very few Governors in my time—and I was fortunate enough to have the most splendid public servants in that capacity—who did not at one time or another make serious mistakes. Well, I want this House to consider the subject from that intimate point of view. Here is this colonial service of ours, which is known and admired throughout the world for its absolute integrity, its freedom from corruption, its ability, its humanity. It is only by these extraordinary qualities that what I may call the daily miracle of the successful administration of the British Empire is continuously carried on. But for them, how would it be possible for these two small islands of ours to administer so large a portion of the earth's surface and with so much distinction and general satisfaction? Sir, I ask the House to put aside every other consideration but that of their Imperial duty, the duty which they cannot escape, even those who least sympathise with the work, be they Irish, Scottish, or English, and look to those great considerations and principles which have made this colonial service undoubtedly what it is. I ask them to recognise

the merits of this service, and I ask them to appreciate the difficulties, under which every member of it lies, and not to discourage them when one of them has committed a mistake which he himself has freely acknowledged. I ask them not to discourage the whole service by harsh criticism of one of its most distinguished members. I hope the House will reject this amendment. If I may venture to advise my friends I would say that our course is clear. When the motion is put after the amendment of the Government has been proposed it will be in the form that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question. I shall vote against that. In so doing I am voting against the resolution as a whole, and I shall vote against it in part; I shall vote against it in every possible way. If the amendment is not carried, then the resolution will be put in its entirety, and I shall vote against that. If the amendment of the Government is carried and put as the substantive motion, I shall then vote against it, as worse indeed, because it is more dishonest than the motion. I hope the House will treat this as a question rather outside ordinary political questions, and that it will reject both the amendment and the resolution. But if it does not, if it accepts either, if it is carried, in that case I shall rely upon the Parliament of the future whose advent will be quickened by this ill-treatment of one of our great officials—I rely upon the future Parliament to do what Parliaments have done in the past more than once, namely, to repair, tardily it may be, a great injustice and to expunge from our records a resolution which, if it ever be placed there, will be a disgrace to them.

LORD MILNER

MAY 24, 1906

[The vote of censure on Lord Milner in the House of Commons produced a remarkable impression among fair-minded men of every class in the British Isles and Empire, irrespective of their political opinions. It was felt that in this public slight to a public servant of confessed devotion and

integrity, the honour of ordinary Britons was involved. Among the different shapes in which this feeling materialised was that familiar and British one of a public dinner, in this case probably as remarkable an occasion of the kind as can be recalled. It was attended by hundreds of entertainers representative of both Houses of Parliament and both parties, the law, art, literature, science, and the army, navy, and Civil Service. Mr. Chamberlain presided, and the following was his speech in proposing the toast of 'Our Guest, Lord Milner.']

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—Sheaves of telegrams and cables from different parts of the Empire have been received by the Committee and Lord Milner, all sympathising with the objects of this banquet. I do not propose to detain you with reading them. There are one or two, however, to which I will venture to call your attention. The first is from the Governor-General of Canada,¹ who says: 'I wish I could be present in body to-night as I am in spirit.' The next is dated from Ottawa: 'Kindly convey to Lord Milner our high appreciation of his splendid services to the Empire, and our earnest hope that he may long be spared to continue his labours for the honour, welfare, and unity of the British dominions.' That is signed by twenty-eight members of the Dominion Parliament. I have innumerable telegrams from all parts of South Africa. I will only read one which, I think, is representative: 'The Milner Address Committee, which includes many leading citizens, and already represents many thousands of signatories of all shades of political opinion throughout the colony, desire me to convey through you, as chairman, their sincerest gratitude for the magnificent services rendered by Lord Milner to South Africa and the Empire.' That is signed by the Chairman of the Milner Address Committee at Cape Town. Now, my lords and gentlemen, I propose to you the toast of 'Our Guest, Lord Milner.'

Considering how many men of great character and distinction we have sent out from these shores to represent this country across the seas, and what splendid services many of them have performed, it might at first sight appear curious how casual and how slight has been any public

¹ Earl Grey.

recognition of what they have done. It would not be difficult for any of us to find many examples. I should not have to go further than this company to find distinguished illustrations of men who have been amongst the greatest names in our country and yet have been suffered, after their term of office was over and they had put aside all the attributes and the panoply of power, to come back home hardly with as much notice as the captain of a cricket team or a champion football club. But I do not know that any of us need regret the fact that we in England, in the United Kingdom, have been so accustomed to take for granted and as a matter of course the splendid performance of responsible duties that we do not think it necessary to call any attention to it. The makers of our Empire never sought popular applause. They have been content that history and posterity should rightly appreciate their services.

But this is not an ordinary occasion. If it were, my noble friend at my side would be the first to desire that it should be no exception to the general rule. But we have an opinion in this matter as well as he; and I say that this is not an ordinary occasion, and that to-day is Empire Day, which, thanks to the patriotic exertions of Lord Meath, is now rapidly becoming universally recognised throughout the British dominions as an occasion on which we may recall the history of our Empire, and bring to mind the privileges which it has brought to us and the responsibilities that it has imposed upon us. This Empire Day, than which no more appropriate day could be found to recognise public and Imperial service, this great company, than which I have never seen one more representative of every kind of national character and expression, has been stirred to express its confidence to Lord Milner, and, as far as in it lies, to redress a great injustice, and protest against the abuse of a temporary majority, which has thought fit to inflict an unmerited slight upon a great servant of the Empire. Lord Milner has been censured by a majority of the House of Commons. He was undefended by the

Government, which, according to a great tradition, is bound to support the servants, the Civil servants of the State if they are unjustly attacked. He was insulted by a minister who only a few years ago beslavered him with fulsome praise; and he was deserted by friends who hailed his appointment with shouts of applause. It is true his conduct has been approved by the majority of the House of Lords; but, strongly as I feel my pride in it, having been so long a member of the House of Commons, I regret that on this occasion they have been a less adequate exponent of what I believe to be the true sentiment of the people than the hereditary House. Under these circumstances, I suppose that I owe the honour of my present position to the fact that it was my privilege to ask Lord Milner to undertake the arduous duties of the post which he filled so long and so well in South Africa. It is not, therefore, unfitting that I, who so appointed him, that I, who, so long as my official relations lasted with the Colonial Office, am at least equally responsible with him for everything that he did, should in a few words remind you in these days of short memories what was the task which he undertook, and what claim he has to the gratitude of the people for the way in which he discharged it. I am not, of course, going to compose a biography of my noble friend. It is only two or three salient facts of recent history that I wish to call your attention to. It was under Lord Cromer in Egypt, under one of the greatest of our British pro-Consuls, it was with Lord Goschen at the Treasury, that Lord Milner served his apprenticeship, gained golden opinions from all those who worked with him, and laid the foundation for the knowledge, the experience, which served him so well in the difficult years that were to follow. But it was in 1897 that I was called upon to appoint some one to occupy what at that time was recognised to be the most arduous, the most responsible and difficult office under the Crown. I had only slight personal acquaintance with Sir Alfred Milner. I made every possible inquiry, as was natural, of those who enjoyed the greater advantage of his acquaint-

ance and his friendship, of those who had worked with him. I found these witnesses to his capacity chiefly among my political opponents. But their testimony was sufficient for me—was complete. What were the requirements necessary for such a post? Sagacity, a more than usual foresight, a conciliatory but at the same time a resolute temper, courage, tenacity, and, above all, impartiality in the strictest sense of the term. On all these points the testimony I sought was universally favourable, and I say now, speaking more than eight years later, that experience has fully justified the favourable reports that I received.

The situation at that time in South Africa was complicated and even dangerous. The raid had sown, not unnaturally, suspicions in the minds of the Boers; racial jealousies had been aroused, not only in the Transvaal, but in the Orange River State and in our own colony at the Cape. The British, on the other hand, were discouraged and disheartened; they had grievances which had always been admitted, and they saw no reason to hope that those grievances would be redressed or considered with sympathy by the mother country. The Government itself had well-founded complaint against the Transvaal for breach in letter and spirit of the great Convention which regulated our relations, which conceded so much to the Boers, but still left us undoubted rights and privileges. Exaggeration prevailed on all sides and among all parties, and it was impossible to secure trustworthy information even upon the most trifling subjects. In these circumstances, Sir A. Milner went out to take up the position of Governor of Cape Colony and High Commissioner for South Africa. For twelve months or more he was silent; and with, I believe, an absolutely unprejudiced mind he sought by every means in his power to discover what was the true situation. For that purpose he consulted all parties; he went to the farms of the Boers—having previously learned their language; he was always ready to consider questions with the industrial populations, and he took every means to inform himself upon the facts of the case, facts upon

which every member of Parliament is now ready at five minutes' notice to express a confident opinion in relation to the most complicated subject. Lord Milner took twelve months and then he spoke—spoke not to his immediate friends, but he conferred with those who were most likely to differ from him, and in the centre of a district which has at different times in colonial history been the great centre of disaffection—he spoke openly to the Dutch, and in a speech equally remarkable for its conciliatory and moderate tone, and at the same time for its clear perception of the difficulties of the problems to be solved, he stated the conclusions at which he had arrived; and after that, in a long series of dispatches which have been published, he informed the Government at home and his countrymen of the actual position of affairs about which so much contest had taken place. And I say now that he saw, as none had seen before, the real issues which were at stake. It was not a question of a large matter that was raised between the two Governments; it was at bottom a conflict of irreconcilable ideals. On the one hand we had the Dutch, under their leader, with hardly concealed aspirations for the fullest possible independence, for rights denied to them by the Convention, for a separate access to the sea, and for the right denied by the Convention of direct communications with foreign countries. We found the Boers claimed to rely rather on foreign support than on the co-operation of the British Government, and that, as he pointed out, was incompatible with the determination of the British in South Africa—shared, let me say, by the Government at home—the determination of Great Britain at all risks to remain the paramount power in South Africa. This we believe to be almost a necessity of our Imperial existence. Everything, remember, was at stake. Our position in South Africa, the confidence of our fellow-subjects abroad, not merely in South Africa, but throughout the world, our influence in the counsels of Europe, all depended on the decision of the great issues that were so prominently put before us by Sir Alfred Milner.

The question remained, in view of these antagonisms, Was it possible to secure a pacific solution? To the endeavour to secure that Sir A. Milner then directed his attention, and let me say he showed an infinite patience and an infinite forbearance. I think at that time it had become evident that with the ideals of President Kruger no compromise was possible; still it was possible to bring to bear once more, as it had been brought to bear before in the history of South Africa, the influence of moderate men in the Transvaal itself and in the Orange Free State, and also the influence of the large Dutch and loyal population in Cape Colony. The endeavour to direct that influence upon President Kruger and his party was Sir Alfred Milner's endeavour. To secure such small concessions and modifications as might have been expected Sir Alfred Milner then devoted his full energy. Hence it was that he attended the Bloemfontein Conference. It was admitted at the time, I remember, by opponents in this country, as well as by opponents in South Africa, that the concessions for which he asked were so moderate that the only fear was that they might prove inadequate. He was willing to guarantee absolutely and in any form that was possible the independence of the Transvaal Republic, and at the same time, as any one who reads the accounts of these prolonged negotiations will see, he never lost sight of what was the crux of the problem, and was determined to maintain untouched and undiminished the rights of the British Government and the rights of British subjects. He strove, not by excessive changes, but rather by such modifications of the existing Constitution as he could, to secure and strengthen the peaceful relations. Well, we are told now that if Lord Milner had acted differently we might have avoided war. I absolutely disbelieve that statement. We might have postponed the war; that is possible, but at what cost? We might have done it by betraying our friends, by surrendering to our enemies. Lord Milner might by yielding have postponed the war, and when he returned to this country he might have no longer been concerned with the

result. He might have avoided the censure of a Radical majority in the House of Commons, but he would have undoubtedly incurred the condemnation of posterity.

During the war Lord Milner gave to Lord Roberts, as Lord Roberts has generously acknowledged, the greatest assistance it was possible for a civilian to give to a military commander. His great influence in Cape Colony was exerted to reduce and limit the area of the conflagration in South Africa. In those dark days we all remember—dark in this country, but darker, how much darker in South Africa it is difficult for us to appreciate, when the minds of even the strongest seemed to give way to pressure, when anxiety was visible in every face—then in those dark days Lord Milner never flinched. He remained as a tower of strength, and did his best to strengthen the weak-kneed and to encourage the weak-hearted. When at last the war was ended he then worked as energetically for the reorganisation of the country and for the restoration of prosperity and for repairing the damage caused by the war as he had worked to bring the war to a successful conclusion. After eight years of incessant, of untiring work, work that it is difficult for any man who has not seen it to appreciate, he returned. And when he left South Africa he could have boasted, if he had chosen to boast, and we can declare for him, that he had restored the confidence of British subjects in British power and British sympathy, that he had extorted from his adversaries the respect which adversaries always give to a brave man, that he had laid the foundation for a renewed and greatly increased prosperity of the country for which he had done so much, that he had marked out lines on which constitutional freedom might be safely extended. And this is the man—to-night he is our honoured guest—of whom it was said the other day with unctuous satisfaction and insolent commiseration that he was powerless, discredited, and poor. That is untrue. Lord Milner is rich in the only sense in which a man so disinterested would care to be opulent; he is rich in the admiration, the affection, the regard of those whose regard and affection are worth having. His policy

is not discredited in the minds of those whose knowledge and experience give a right to express an opinion. If he is powerless in the sense that for the moment he holds no high official position, we hope and believe that his services will always be given when required, and that he remains now one of the great assets of the British Empire. I ask you to drink the health of Lord Milner.

In reply to the toast of 'The Chairman' Mr. Chamberlain said :

Sir George White, My Lords and Gentlemen, I thank you for the manner in which this toast has been proposed and received. It has been a great privilege for me to preside over this large meeting which, I think, has served a most useful and valuable purpose, and which will always be remembered as having produced two important speeches, to which we have listened, from two builders of Empire—Lord Milner and Lord Curzon. We have learned from them the spirit in which our great public servants pursue their task. From Lord Curzon we have learned that their guiding influence is their devotion to duty, and that it is borne in upon them by experience, as it ought to be borne in upon us by the lessons of history, that an Empire obtained by sacrifice can only be maintained in the same way. I think now that we may put aside and forget the tawdry incident that led to this great banquet. It has served a purpose other than that which its authors intended, and it has given us all something to encourage us, something upon which we may reflect. There is only one additional remark I would like to make. I would like to impress upon all whom my words may reach how desirable it is that those who speak should remember how extended is the echo of their words. The love of our colonies to the motherland depends upon their respect for us. They will never respect the motherland if she shows ingratitude to her great public servants. Not only are our colonies concerned, but think of the men who throughout a large part of the world are carrying out the arduous duties we have imposed upon them. Do you think that our treat-

ment of the great civil servants, if it be in any way ungenerous, is calculated to encourage them? How is it that we are to-day a great governing race? It is because in the past we have always found men willing in great crises to take responsibility. Modern conditions of life, especially the ease of quick communication, the invention of the telegraph, are not favourable to the development of such character; but that is all the more reason why we should be careful not still further to interfere, in the courageous execution of their duty, with those distant servants. It is upon them that the future of the Empire depends, as the past has depended. A blow at the individual is a blow struck also at that great army of civil servants to whom the Empire owes so much, and of whom our guest is one of the most distinguished ornaments.

'OF NO MEAN CITY'

BIRMINGHAM, JULY 7, 1906

[Mr. Chamberlain's seventieth birthday was made the occasion of great rejoicing in Birmingham. The following speech was delivered at a public banquet given in his honour, and in that of Mrs. Chamberlain, on Saturday, July 7; that which follows it at a great meeting held in Bingley Hall on the Monday evening. Two days later sudden and serious illness, the result of persistent over-work, laid Mr. Chamberlain definitely aside from the exercise of public speaking. And these utterances, made in his own city and among his own people, in which, as by a prevision, he reviewed his career in municipal and in Imperial politics, and set forth, in a key of high faith and courage, as by a final testament, his policy for the nation and the Empire, must be regarded as the last speeches of Joseph Chamberlain.

MY LORD MAYOR, MY LORDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—
However strenuously I endeavour to express my thanks to the people of Birmingham for their constant kindness to me, I feel that my words must always be inadequate to represent the depth and sincerity of my feelings. I can never keep pace with your goodness, for as soon as I have acknowledged one claim on my gratitude you immediately

proceed to confer upon me another obligation. My Lord Mayor, I appreciate very highly your hospitality and the way in which you have made yourself the mouthpiece of my fellow-citizens on an anniversary which recalls to my mind so many personal and public associations, such a long course of unbroken friendships, and, above all, which fills my heart with pride and thankfulness that, with the greater part of my life behind me—an open book which all of you may read and criticise—I yet have been able to retain the distinction which I have most coveted and which I most prize—the affectionate regard of those amongst whom I live. Few men have been more fortunate than I—happy in the home that I have made amongst you; happy in the wide circle of my public friends; and, above all, happy also in having had behind me during the whole course of my career the confidence and support of this democratic community. My Lord Mayor, I assure you that my wife joins me in this, as in everything else with which she has been associated with me during many years of my strenuous life. She feels, as I do, that from the moment she came among you, eighteen years ago, she has been the adopted daughter of Birmingham, and she feels a sympathy and interest which even I cannot surpass in all that concerns your public life and the welfare and the happiness of the people.

My Lord Mayor, in this building, and under these circumstances you have naturally recalled the associations which are connected with my municipal life. Thirty years ago I resigned the position which you now occupy in order to become a representative of the city in Parliament. I did not accept the change without many misgivings and searchings of heart. I was not certain that I was not giving up a sphere in which I felt I might be of some service, and entering upon unknown waters, upon a future which neither I nor any one could foresee, and even now, after thirty years of considerable and wide experience, after full knowledge of the opportunities which a position in the House of Commons may give to a man, I still feel there is

no more honourable position, and there are few in which any man can be more useful to his time and generation, than in the performance of civic duties. And I look back with unmixed pleasure to my association with the local life of the city in which I have passed more than half a century, and with admiration—constant admiration—for those who, whether in my time or since, have given unstinted and unselfish service to fulfil the duty which lies nearest to them, to endeavour to leave the world a little better than they found it. Never can I have more loyal supporters than those that I found in my old municipal time. They were men who did their work with ability and power, and, above all, with absolute unselfishness. There was no obstruction in that time. 'Guillotines' were quite unnecessary, but each man did his part, and he wished for no other fee or reward than the good of the town he was trying to serve. I know there have been times, then as now, when people were inclined to underestimate the dignity and importance of this local life, and yet it seems to me that there is no work which men of education and ability can do with greater satisfaction to themselves and greater advantage to others than this.

. When I think of the changes which have been carried out in my time, the constant and successful struggle with disease, the provision which has been made for health, for recreation, and for everything which contributes to raise the standard of life and increase the happiness of the masses of the population, I admit I am inclined to doubt whether this silent, almost unhonoured, but unceasing display of local patriotism has not done more for our country than the sensational reforms which we owe to great statesmen and to the labours of the House of Commons. In any case, my Lord Mayor, it is not given to every man to play a distinguished part in national politics, but every man may take a hand in the work of local administration. If complaint is made, and I think it is made justly sometimes, that our local administration occasionally falls off from the high ideal which it ought always to keep before it—if there is

inefficiency, ignorance, extravagance—the fault does not lie with these great democratic institutions which express so well every form of public need and public opinion, which give such full opportunity to every class and every form of ability, it lies with those who, having advantages, denied, it may be, to others, advantages of influence, wealth, and education, yet refuse, or fail, from indifference, to place their talents at the disposal of the community, leaving all this great work to be accomplished by others whose willingness is perhaps greater than their capacity to perform it. But in any case, I hope that the spirit which has always been present in our life in Birmingham, which has been infused generally into the local life of the country, may permanently continue ; that we may look forward to a younger generation to own its debt to the older one, and to maintain the traditions which have kept for Birmingham a high place in the annals of the country.

My Lord Mayor, as the years pass—and, indeed, I think this is almost the only disadvantage which I attach to advancing years—as the years pass, unhappily, well-tried friends and comrades of our youth drop out of the ranks and are seen no more. Fresh recruits take their places ; they cannot bring back to us all the associations which are connected with the old. I think of those days when, before these buildings were erected, I worked with so many patriotic and high-spirited men in the old Council Chamber in Moor Street, in the first School Board, and in other public institutions of the town. They were, although, perhaps I should not say so, a remarkable association of men moved by one great ideal ; with an appreciation of what the town might be, and what it ought to be ; with the determination that no sacrifice was too great in order to make it what their imagination saw that it might become. The number of these men has been sadly diminished ; yet they, and, those of whom I see a considerable number here, still happily surviving, were the real makers of modern Birmingham. And Mr. Mayor, when you pay me an honour which I feel goes far beyond my desert, I know that you wish that

we hold the names of these men in kindly and honourable remembrance.

My Lord Mayor, I thank you once more, I thank this great and representative company for the splendid reception which they have given to me and to mine, and I thank through you the people of Birmingham for their generous recognition of what, at all events, has been an honest endeavour to serve them. Surely that is even more honourable to them than it is to us. Who can say in the presence of such circumstances as these which we witness to-day that the democracy is ungenerous or ungrateful? I feel that if I have been permitted to serve this community no man has ever had more generous masters. They have been my teachers also. What I am, for good or for ill, they have made me—this people and this city of my adoption and my affection. It has been the home of strong convictions, of great ideals, of frank expression, of earnest endeavour to carry out its ideals; and I, in my time, have tried to interpret what I believe to be the spirit of the town, and have found in the affection of my own people an overwhelming reward for a strenuous life of work and contest.

THE LAST SPEECH

BINGLEY HALL, JULY 9, 1906

MR. CHAIRMAN, MY LORDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—No man in my position could fail to be touched by the personal note of kindness that has run through the great and unparalleled demonstrations of last Saturday and to-day. On Saturday, as I passed through eighteen miles of people, as I looked into their faces I seemed to be the centre of a great family gathering, and I naturally recalled all the associations connected with my municipal and private life in Birmingham. To-night, in this hall, identified as it is with so many striking incidents and great causes in which I have taken part during my political career, it is to

the political side of my life that I naturally turn in the retrospect to which I am induced. I am conscious, indeed, that here also, in the warmth of your reception, there is an assurance of personal feeling and of kindness too. But I hope I am not wrong in thinking that there is also a sign of political agreement. That, of course, is especially true of the multitudinous congratulations and good wishes which are contained in the addresses which I gratefully acknowledge from all parts of the United Kingdom, and in the innumerable letters and telegrams which have come to me with equal cordiality, conveying the good wishes of their senders from all parts of the British Empire. Mr. Chairman, you said just now something of the unnecessary bitterness of political controversy. Perhaps too much is made of that. I admit very readily that all my life I have been a strenuous fighter for the causes that I have thought to be righteous. I have received hard blows, and I have endeavoured to return them. I bear no malice. I make no complaint, though, sometimes, I may have thought that my motives have been unfairly represented. In that case I have always felt that any such unfairness has merely acted as a rallying cry to the friends who hastened to my side. And while the attacks have been forgotten the friends remain.

I have been your representative for thirty years, which is a long time in the life of a man. I think there are not many members of the House of Commons who have sat in that House for a longer period, and certainly there are very few, if there are any, who have sat there representing continuously one constituency, and that a constituency with which all the interests of their home and private life are most closely connected. And during all this time Birmingham has been behind me. Birmingham has cheered me when I might otherwise have been discouraged. Birmingham has strengthened my hands, and has given me an assurance of ultimate victory. Sometimes, it is strange, I find myself taunted with having changed my opinions and forgotten my ideals. Well, ladies and gentlemen, if indeed that be

a fault, and if I have committed it, I have done so in good company. But have we changed? And if we have changed, is change a crime? During the space of a whole generation that I have been your political representative, what is there that has not changed? The conditions of the people, the needs of the people, they have altered. The state of parties has altered. 'Old names have no longer their old meaning; the position of the country has altered, especially in relation to other nations; and if, under these circumstances, we alone had remained unchanged we should have been false to the great motto of our town, and we should have been false to our progressive principles. I came across, the other day, a quotation from my old leader, for whom, though I differed from him in later years, I have always entertained a respect amounting almost to devotion. I found this quotation from Mr. Gladstone. He said, 'People talk of a change in opinion as if it were a disgrace. To me it is a sign of life. If you are alive you must change. It is only the dead who remain the same. And of all charges brought against a man or a party, that of inconsistency because of changed opinion is the most inept. As tramped up against a political opponent it is usually a mere party trick.' So, ladies and gentlemen, on the authority of Mr. Gladstone I say that change is not necessarily a crime. But the people who accuse you and me of change are wanting in the intelligence which should enable them to distinguish between change in principles which can only be accepted under the stress of some great circumstance, and change in details and method of application which every wise man applies to everything in the course of his life. And now I claim for Birmingham—I claim for you as I do for myself—that we have throughout the years pursued a higher and truer consistency than mere adherence to obsolete formulæ, and that we have preserved the main principles with which we began, even if we have changed the methods of their application.

What has been the great event in our generation? Surely it was the event—I am referring to the introduction of Home

Rule into the politics of the Liberal party—surely it was an event momentous in its issues which has altered the whole course of our political history, revolutionised our political relations, destroyed the Liberal party as we knew it, and as we in our time helped to cement and to strengthen it. But when Mr. Gladstone surrendered to Mr. Parnell, when he accepted Home Rule and allied himself with the men who a short time previously he had described as ‘marching through rapine to the disintegration of the Empire’—when he did that who was it who changed? It was not Birmingham. Birmingham remained true to the higher conception of patriotism which refused to weaken the heart of this great Empire in order to purchase the temporary political support of a few disloyal subjects. Now I maintain that at that time and since, Birmingham, and all who have joined with Birmingham, and sympathised with our views, have been consistently faithful to two great objects of policy. In the first place, they have been strenuous advocates of social reform. In the second place, they have been the most sturdy upholders of Imperial interest. In domestic politics we, of every class and of every section of the Unionist party, have supported every constructive proposal for bettering the condition of the masses of the people, and for raising the standard of life amongst the great majority. We have had no sympathy with the negative policy which merely criticises and resists.* No party can ever be successful, which has not of its own what in military affairs they call an ‘offensive defensive,’ which means that they should best defend themselves against the enemy by attacking them whenever possible.

We have thought that an offensive policy, a definite concrete policy of reform, was the best weapon we could have to our hands in order to meet the purely destructive policy of our opponents. In a democratic State such as ours, with a Government which in our time has been made truly representative, we together have held the belief that advantage ought to be taken of the machinery which has thus been created to do for the people at large, for the whole com-

munity, what no individual can do for himself. What we have done at home in Birmingham with our City Council to help us—that we have done also in national affairs. We have been willing to trust the people, and the people's representatives. We have urged them to use their power in order to better the lot of the great majority of the people. Now, in this belief, you will remember that more than one unauthorised programme has been issued during the last thirty years with the Birmingham stamp. And let me say, looking back, I don't think we have any reason to be ashamed of our programmes, or to be discontented with the result of their adoption. The extension of local government, the provision of free education, the facilities given for the creation of allotments and small ownerships, the great development of factory legislation, the compensation provided for accidents in the course of employment—these constitute only a small part of the practical social reforms which have been carried by Conservative and by Unionist Governments during the generation to which I am referring. Now I want you to see what it seems to me to be interesting to remember—that these reforms were not carried without opposition. We had, of course, the opposition of our political opponents, 'Radicals,' as many of them call themselves, that were false to Radical principles, not knowing what social reform meant, except as a cry at election time, —to be dropped a few weeks later. But the bitterest opponents of all were those so-called Liberals, the descendants and representatives of the old Whig party, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Goschen, Lord James, with whom, although I am said to have changed, I still find myself in constant conflict. Both sides are consistent, both sides act after their kind, and these gentlemen, Free Traders as they are, were quite right in opposing the proposals of social reform, as they are right now in opposing proposals for fiscal reform. The same principles are involved. The Free Traders were against all State interference of any kind. They were against the Factory Acts; they were opposed to the laws to prevent fraud and adulteration, especially in the

interests of the working classes ; they were against trade unions, they were in favour of unlimited competition, they would buy everything in the cheapest market, and especially labour. Yes, but it is cheering to observe, in spite of their distinguished opposition, in spite of the efforts made twenty or thirty years ago by the same distinguished and superior persons who are opposing me now as they opposed me then, that all these fine doctrines of Free Trade have gone to the wall. There are other equally absurd superstitions which are going to follow them, and the time is coming when, perhaps, even they will see that we cannot logically and consistently attempt to defend labour against unfair competition without defending at the same time and against the same unfair competition the products of that labour. We are moving, ladies and gentlemen, not so quick, perhaps, as the most impatient of us might desire, but we are moving on the right lines and entirely to my satisfaction.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I have said there was a second object which the 'Birmingham school,' as it is sometimes called—now that we are a University town we are all 'schools'—the second object of the 'Birmingham school' was to maintain the strength and union of this Empire, and to hand down our great inheritance unimpaired to our descendants. But again, here, also, Birmingham is in conflict with Cobdenism. What were the views of the Free Traders ? Mr. Cobden declared that he rejoiced chiefly in the federation of Canada because he thought it was a preliminary step to the entire separation of that great dominion from the British motherland. Mr. Cobden was opposed to our possession of India—I am not certain that he did not think that to be a crime. I am not questioning his perfect sincerity and honesty. I have no doubt his opinions were shared at that time by many of his followers. But let me impress upon you and upon the country that all these things go together, and that the men who imposed free imports upon this generation were the same men who, if they had had their way, would have had no empire for us to be proud of, and no colonies to which we might give a preference.

I maintain that never in our history has Birmingham sympathised with the Little Englander. We have held to this Empire of ours as a trust received from our ancestors who were labouring for posterity as well as for themselves, and who, by great effort and self-sacrifice, built up the edifice of our dominion, whose privileges we are permitted to enjoy, and whose responsibilities, unless we are unworthy, we shall be proud to bear. Our glory! It will be the glory of this generation if we strengthen the foundations of this great and unparalleled dominion; it will be our eternal disgrace if we allow it to fall. If Birmingham is a great city, what has made it a great city? No, not I. I could have done nothing without the unstinted and unselfish work of those who came so readily to my assistance. Birmingham is a great city to-day because a generation ago men were found—practically all its citizens—who were willing to work and, if necessary, to make sacrifices in order to maintain and support its reputation. If the Empire is to be great all its members must take in it similar pride, and take upon themselves a similar obligation. I have spoken of the ‘Birmingham school.’ I do not need to defend its tenets. There is another school, a very small school, that has always been with us—a school which seems to me to be utterly devoid of imagination, which can see nothing of the future, and nothing of the greater factors in our individual and national life. An individual, is he not the better for having some other interests than those which only concern his own pocket? Is he not the better for having a family to care for, for having a city for which he can do something, for having a country which he loves, for having an empire of which he is proud? The character of the individual depends upon the greatness of the ideals upon which he rests, and the character of a nation is the same. The moral grandeur of a nation depends upon its being sometimes able to forget itself, sometimes able to think of the future of the race for which it stands. England without an empire! Can you conceive it? England in that case would not be the England we love. If the ties of sympathy which have

gradually been woven between ourselves and our children who are soon to become great nations across the seas, if these ties were weakened or destroyed, if we suffered their affection to die for want of food for it, if we allowed them to drift apart, then this England of ours would sink from the comparative position which it has enjoyed throughout the centuries. It would no longer be a power, if not supreme, at all events of the greatest influence, generally well exercised on the civilisation and the peace of the world. It would be a fifth-rate nation, existing on the sufferance of its more powerful neighbours. We will not have it.

The school to which I refer is blind to considerations of this kind. Its members appeal to what I consider are unworthy interests. They appeal entirely to the immediate material consequences of any act we may recommend to them. But they are short-sighted. They are not merely unpatriotic in the larger sense in which I like to use the word. It is not merely that they are selfish, but it is that they are foolish, and that these material interests for which alone they care would suffer under the system which they profess—would suffer as much as the national character and the national influence. What is it that we want? What is it that we desire for our country? National prosperity. Not indeed in the sense that we covet a greater aggregation of national wealth which, for aught we know, may never be properly distributed. It is not the amount of the income tax, not the number of cheques that pass through the clearing-house that marks the progress of a nation. It is our advance towards the great Radical aspiration, 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number.' That is what we desire. That is what we, you and I, have been seeking during this past thirty years, and I have told you more than once in the course of that time that there was a greater reform than any I had yet advocated publicly before you—there was a greater reform in the future which would do more for you than all these attempts at bettering your condition, and that was a reform which would secure for the masses of the industrial population in this country

constant employment at fair wages. That is an end which, with all our labour, we have not yet attained. Even now, when trade is extraordinarily active, when our opponents are boasting of record exports and imports, as though, forsooth, they were the product of any activity of theirs—I say even now there is want of employment and something much worse. There is the fact that relatively, in proportion to our competitors, in the constant struggle for existence we are getting behindhand, and when the tide of prosperity recedes, as it always has done, as it must do again, and when a time of depression follows it, we shall be the sufferers. The working classes, especially, will be the sufferers, and we shall find then that it will be impossible, without a change, to find employment for the constantly increasing population of these islands. That is the danger. I am condemned for pointing it out beforehand. What would be the good of pointing it out after we have suffered from it? Let us provide against it. Let us find the remedy.

The remedy is at hand, and if we are not too careless, too apathetic as to the future, if we are not too timid to act, I say there is even now time to hold for ourselves and our people our own trade. And we can hold it against all fair competition. And we can do more. We can extend our trade in the best markets, with our best friends. We can benefit them in trading with them, while they give us reciprocal advantage in the preference which they give for our manufactures. We can do this. We can strengthen the union. We can draw closer the growing nations, the sister states, and by a commercial union we can pave the way for that federation which I see constantly before me as a practical object of aspiration—that federation of free nations which will enable us to prolong in ages yet to come all the glorious traditions of the British race.

Ladies and gentlemen, if we are to fulfil these aspirations, believe me, we must cultivate the affection and the sympathy of these children of ours in the colonies. We must learn to understand them better, to appreciate more highly their mission and their work. They are our pioneers sent

out from here, fighting against nature, fighting against dangers and difficulties of every kind. They have worthily maintained the honour of the flag and the interests of the Empire, and they deserve the sympathy which I claim you should give them. But are we going the right way to produce this kindly feeling? You may be, who agree with the words I say, but what about those who profess to represent you? What are they doing at this time to draw closer together the British Empire? Only these last few weeks I have heard men in the House of Commons, ignorant—crassly ignorant—of all that concerns the British Empire, ignorant of the Greater Britain across the seas, careless of its future, careless indeed of everything but the petty interests which they claim particularly to represent—I have heard these men depreciating the motives of our colonists, treating their generous offers with neglect and scorn, and denying to them, whose shoes they are unworthy to unlatch, the common attributes of justice and humanity. There are men in the House of Commons who profess in a special sense to be the representatives of labour, who would not allow me, who represented a great working-class constituency, and for whom seven or eight thousand, most of them working men, voted at the last election—they would not allow me the claim to represent you. In order to do that, according to their theories, I should have to be a man who did some work thirty years ago, and never did any after. And it is these men who are at this time blackening the character of those who are upholding the British dominions and the British flag throughout the world. It is they who, with a fatuous conceit, dictate the policy of colonial statesmen and, forsooth, threaten the great colonies to whom we have given self-government, threaten them with the veto of their petty standard of morality if they go contrary in any way to their views and party interests. They have no word of sympathy for the men who suffer for the Imperial cause.

The other day officers, British soldiers, were murdered with savage brutality without reason or provocation. They

had no sympathy for these officers, and none for the families they may have left behind them ; their one idea was to shield the assassins from the proper penalty of their crimes. There is something worse, if possible. In the Boer War, the beginning of the war, our colony of Natal, with its brave population of, comparatively a mere handful of, a hundred thousand men, although it was not directly concerned in the war, nevertheless was called upon to bear the first brunt of the contest. They rose to it ; they put almost all their citizens in arms, and they, with the small British force then that was present at Ladysmith, held the fort against the advancing foe until such time as the larger force of the mother country could come to their assistance. Have they not deserved well of you ? And yet now, in their extremity, when they have been face to face with the direst possibility of all, with the possibility of a general native rising in which they would be as one to ten or twenty of their enemies, and which would in any case lead to unspeakable horrors and outrages in the case of scattered whites over a vast extent of territory—in this extremity what is it that you do, what is it that is done in your name ? Would you not have thought that your Government would have taken the opportunity of making such return as it could, and would have pressed upon the Government of Natal, which, thank goodness, has been nobly assisted by some of the other colonies—would you not have thought that they would have pressed upon them Imperial aid, and said : ‘ You, the child, came to our help and stood by our side when we were in difficulties ; we now hasten to reciprocate your loyalty, and to help you in your time of difficulty ? ’

But that is not what your Government does. It is not what your Parliament does. No. They are occupying themselves with the details of a trial of which they have not read the evidence. They are occupying themselves, without any knowledge of the circumstances, in criticising the kindness, the general feeling of justice which animates these people as much as it does ourselves ; and one of them, as a climax to the meanness of the whole thing, actually write as

letter to a native chief in this country, and wishes him success in what? Success in the contest between his people and our children. I will dwell no longer on questions which fill me with disgust and indignation. Their effect is deplorable. How can you expect the people outside this country who do not understand that these men are seeking a petty notoriety—how can you expect them to understand that a member of the British Parliament can utter language of that kind without some supreme cause, which allows him to take the part of every country but his own? But one thing I will say, and I say it in your name: these men, at any rate, do not represent the working classes of England, and never yet in our history, or in the history of the British race, has the great democracy been unpatriotic.

The union of the Empire must be preceded and accompanied, as I have said, by a better understanding, by a closer sympathy. To secure that is the highest object of statesmanship now at the beginning of the twentieth century, and, if these were the last words that I were permitted to utter to you I would rejoice to utter them in your presence and with your approval. I know that the fruition of our hopes is certain. I hope I may be able to live to congratulate you upon our common triumph, but in any case I have faith in the people. I trust in the good sense, the intelligence, and the patriotism of the majority, the vast majority, of my countrymen. I look forward to the future with hope and confidence, and

*‘Others I doubt not, if not we,
The issue of our toil shall see.’*

THE END

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